

Treasures from the Bronze Age and Beyond

*The Hallwyl Museum's Collection of Small
Chinese and Korean Bronzes*



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Introduction

Annika Williams

THE OBJECTS COMPRISING the Hallwyl Collection of small Chinese and Korean bronzes are displayed in two glass cases in the two galleries housing East Asian ceramics in the Hallwyl Museum. The display cases could be described as windows to the late Chinese Bronze Age and onwards to the 12th century.

The bronze objects show a continuity in China and its interaction with Korea seen through bronze mirrors. There are spectacular bronze mirrors in the collection, but the significance of the Hallwyl Collection of small bronzes is to be found in how it was shaped as a study collection. It was among the first collections of its kind to reach Europe. The collection comprises 362 inventory numbers, of which 350 objects are Chinese and 12 are Korean.

Although Wilhelmina von Hallwyl's collection of East Asian Ceramics was acquired during a long period of time (1879–1930) her collection of Chinese and Korean bronzes is, to the greater part that of another collector. It was the Swedish engineer and collector Orvar Karlbeck (1879–1967) who built the greater portion of the Hallwyl Collection of small Chinese bronzes. Karlbeck would acquire these objects by purchase during his years in China.

Background to the project of highlighting the Hallwyl Collection of small bronzes

IN JANUARY 2018 the Hallwyl Museum became a part of the newly-formed authority *The National Historical Museums* comprising *The Hallwyl Museum, The Historical Museum, The Royal Armoury, The Skokloster Castle Museum, the Royal Coin Cabinet and Tumba Papermill Museum*.

The project is the result of the collaboration between *The National Historical Museums* and *The National Museums of World Culture*. The purpose of the project was to shed new light on Wilhelmina von Hallwyl's unique early 20th Century collection by adding layers of cultural historical context to the original research of Orvar Karlbeck and linguist and sinologist Bernard Karlgren. Curator Michel Lee (Department of Collections, focusing on the Collections of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, *The National Museums of World Culture*) has together with the museum's curatorial department examined the bronzes in the Hallwyl Collection. The purpose of the project was to focus on the objects and to study the circumstances in which the objects were made in order to enhance understanding across cultures.

The project would not have been possible without the generous support of the *Hallwyl Museum Association* (*Hallwylska Museiföreningen*). Since the 1990s the Hallwyl Museum has been able to process the collection of arts and decorative arts due to generous support from the *Hallwyl Museum Association*. The *Hallwyl Museum Association* was founded by Wilhelmina von Hallwyl in 1921. Since the 1990s experts have worked closely with the museum's curators to update existing data since the 78-volume catalogue, initiated by Wilhelmina von Hallwyl, was concluded in the mid-1950s.

Historical bonds between the Hallwyl Museum and the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities

WITH THIS PROJECT, we reestablish the strong historical bonds between the Hallwyl Museum and the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities. The China Research Committee (*Kinakommittén*) was formed in 1919 to financially support the geologist Johan Gunnar Anderson's expeditions in China. Crown Prince Gustaf (VI) Adolf was chairman of the Committee 1921–1950. With his in-depth knowledge and experience in archaeology, and as a collector and connoisseur of East Asian antiques, the Crown Prince, played a coordinating role in the research of East Asian studies in Sweden.

The foundation of the collections of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities would be the work by Johan Gunnar Andersson (1874–1960) in China. The Swedish-Chinese Expeditions would form the foundation of the East Asian Collections and in 1926 a museum for the collections was founded by the Swedish Riksdag. In 1959 the National Museum's Collections of East Asian and South East Asian collections of art and decorative arts merged with the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities. Since 1963, these collections have been on display in the present museum building at Skeppsholmen in Stockholm.

Wilhelmina von Hallwyl would support the East Asian Collections with funding for purchase of objects to the collections. In the Hallwyl archives, we find correspondence with museum curators, collectors and suppliers as well as invoices and receipts of purchases. The correspondence with Johan Gunnar Andersson, the first director of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, is preserved in the Hallwyl archives. In a letter to Wilhelmina, Andersson is thanking her with the words “*May I once more convey to you, dear Countess, on behalf of our institution and myself our graceful thanks*”.

The importance of cross-cultural understanding

WILHELMINA VON HALLWYL's intentions with her future museum was to present “a material as rich and diverse as possible to illuminate my own time as well as the cultures of the past”. She realized the value of cataloguing the collections at an early stage and would publish a descriptive catalogue of all her collections. A number of art historians were employed to categorize, register and describe the thousands of objects from widely diverse areas. The Hallwyl Catalogue comprises 78 volumes.

Orvar Karlbeck would catalogue the collection of small Chinese and Korean bronzes and Professor Bernard Karlgren carried out the translations of the Chinese inscriptions. In 1938, Karbleck published a handbook where he would elaborate on some of the original descriptions described in the Hallwyl Catalogue.

We hope that through the online exhibition's selection of highlighted objects and the pdf publication, this unique collection of small bronzes will be accessible to the modern museum visitor.



Julius Kronberg, 1895. *Portrait of Wilhelmina von Hallwyl*. Oil on canvas. The Hallwyl Museum.

How Wilhelmina von Hallwyl Shaped her Collection

Annika Williams

THE HALLWYL MUSEUM, located in the very heart of Stockholm, is closely associated with its visionary founder, Wilhelmina von Hallwyl (1844–1930). The visitor to the museum enters an exclusive time-capsule from the turn of the 20th Century. Wilhelmina von Hallwyl, a passionate and sometimes obsessive collector, deliberately transformed her home into a museum. Her collections illuminate the importance of a private collection for scholarly research in the early 1900s.

This essay will describe the way in which Wilhelmina von Hallwyl shaped the Hallwyl Collection and what her purpose with the museum was. The essay aims to highlight Wilhelmina von Hallwyl's patterns of collecting and the contemporary reception of her activities as collector and connoisseur.

As a collector Wilhelmina von Hallwyl would have an “encyclopedic” perspective on collecting. She deliberately aimed for a wide selection of objects and artworks. The Hallwyl Museum could be described as a showcase for the display of Wilhelmina von Hallwyl’s eclectic taste. The collections of Old Master paintings, East Asian ceramics and bronzes, European porcelain, silver and jewellery, European and Oriental arms and other artefacts - range over a great time span of 5 000 years. The collection, integrated with the house, follow the pattern of how objects and artworks would be collected and displayed in a collector’s home at the turn of the 20th Century. This was an era which would see many great collectors.

Wilhelmina and her husband Walther von Hallwyl (1839–1921) moved into their newly built house on the 16th of May 1898. The daughters Ebba, Ellen and Irma were already married and lived elsewhere when their parents moved in. With Hallwyl House, the Swedish architect Isac Gustaf Clason (1856–1930) had designed a worthy setting for the collections. The building was erected 1893–1898 as the family’s principal residence. At that time, Wilhelmina von Hallwyl had already laid the foundations of an important collection of European porcelain. She would soon begin to build the collection of Dutch and Flemish artworks. The collection of East Asian ceramics was built over a long period of time, although the majority of the East Asian ceramics were acquired 1907–1923.

Wilhelmina’s husband did not share her great passion for collecting or planning for a future museum. Walther von Hallwyl who was born and raised in Switzerland would eventually, after they were married in 1865, become a Swedish citizen, businessman and member of Parliament. He became the CEO of Ljusne Woxna Industries in 1883, the sawmill, timber and ironmaking industry which had been founded by Wilhelmina’s father Wilhelm Kempe (1807–1883).

Soon after the von Hallwyls had moved in, the thoughts of transforming the house to a museum would begin to evolve. Wilhelmina and Walther von Hallwyl decided to donate their house and the collections to the Swedish State in 1920. It was agreed that they would remain at the palace for the rest of their days. The deed of gift would not be activated until both of them had passed. Walther von Hallwyl passed away in 1921 and Wilhelmina in 1930. The museum opened for the public in 1938.

Wilhelmina's Background

WILHELMINA VON HALLWYL had no formal education. When she was eight, a governess was employed. Miss Plaum from Germany would be responsible for Wilhelmina's education¹. As an adult, being a wealthy cosmopolitan, she travelled a lot and felt at home in the big cities. Eva-Helena Cassel Piehl, who has written the biography of Wilhelmina von Hallwyl, has described the extensive travels in Europe as Wilhelmina's University.² When Wilhelmina travelled she would study the museum collections as well as buying objects. Since she had an eye for quality, she would eventually become an experienced collector. Over the years she developed a network of collectors, dealers and museum professionals. Wilhelmina was a great philanthropist and would support the museum field and contribute to develop several important cultural institutions in Sweden.

The source of Wilhelmina von Hallwyl's passion for collecting is to be found in her early childhood when she would begin to collect naturalia. As she got older, she wanted to collect "everything old".³ Her motivation to collect may be explained through her in-depth interest in cultural history.

Wilhelmina von Hallwyl's industrialist father, Wilhelm Kempe, was the businessman and entrepreneur who was born in Germany. He had moved to Stockholm in order to learn trade in his Uncle's business. He married his cousin Johanna Wallis (1818–1909) in 1843. Wilhelmina was their only child and she grew up surrounded by art since both her parents would take a great interest in art as well as acquire it, foremost art by Swedish contemporary artists. When Johanna Kempe was widowed, she would build a fine collection of old master paintings. Wilhelmina accompanied her parents when they travelled. There are many strong women in Wilhelmina's cultural background. The mother, Johanna Kempe was probably a great inspiration to her. Johanna, who had been allowed to participate in her brother's education by tutors at home had probably received a broader education compared to many women of her time. Mrs Kempe was an eager visitor to museums. Wilhelmina remembered in her *Annual Notes* that "as early as that I must unconsciously have liked museums and churches, hence I would never object, although my mother was tireless".⁴ Did these early visits to churches and museums influence Wilhelmina's passion for the old masters? Wilhelmina's parents had a great passion for music as well. Their home became the scene of musical soirées for a small circle of friends as well as an arena for collecting art.

Johanna Kempe would say; “pray, save us from the good old days”⁵. Many women would come together and be organized in order to elevate women’s positions in society. Johanna Kempe would advocate, as she said “in a quiet way”⁶, for women’s right to vote. She admired the writer and activist Fredrika Bremer and supported the *Fredrika-Bremer-Association* in Sweden, founded in 1884, with the objective to enlighten women about their rights. Wilhelmina von Hallwyl herself did not participate in the women’s suffrage and it is not easy to answer the question whether she was a feminist or not. Some bitterness may be revealed, in her unpublished memoirs called *The Annual Notes*; “it is bitter that a woman shall not be acknowledged for what she has created, but that it is the man who will get all the credit”⁷. Wilhelmina von Hallwyls’ eldest daughter Ebba von Eckemann was a leading figure among the conservative women involved in the women’s right to vote movement. On the 9th of September 1911 mother and daughter would host a splendid dinner for 300 conference participants of the International Council of Women at Hallwyl House. An acquaintance would write in a letter to a friend that “this must be Mrs Eckermann’s doing, she must have made her mother arrange this party, Countess von Hallwyl herself is absolutely foreign to everything called feminism”⁸. When women finally did get the right to vote Wilhelmina would use her right. She is mentioned in a newspaper clip called “Famous people at the ballot box”⁹.

As has been pointed out in *Women Patrons and Collectors*, edited by the scholars Susan Bracken, Andrea M. Gáldy, and Adriana Turpin, the world has seen many female collectors who have built important collections. Although there has been a tendency to view female collectors’ collecting as consumption and not serious collecting.¹⁰ Wilhelmina von Hallwyl’s pattern of collecting was similar to many of her contemporary collectors. If we study how she built her collections, we see that she would take a curatorial role; she chose what and how to collect and how and where to display her collections. In her *Annual Notes* she is frustrated when she is not getting credit for what she has accomplished and is expressing her frustration with irony; “*a woman is apparently never able to think or act wisely, only the man, the wonder of the world*”. Wilhelmina, who would work hard with the cataloguing of the Hallwyl Collection, the Hallwyl Archives and the excavation at Schloss Hallwil in Switzerland would say that “*there is not a man who can work as hard as a woman can.*”¹¹

At a Soirée on the 12th of December in 1927 Wilhelmina thinks that the reason for Professor Andersson to invite his wife had probably been because Wilhelmina would otherwise have been the only woman among the 17 gentlemen.¹² She would enjoy the meetings at the Far Eastern Collections. On the 18th of April in 1929 professor Andersson invited her to The East Asian Collections and she “*could not resist and went and was not so tired as I had feared that I would be*”. She had not been out of the house since January because of health problems.¹³

The Purpose of the Hallwyl Museum

WILHELMINA VON HALLWYL had a very clear intention with her future museum. Her diverse collection would for all time be located in situ. Transforming Hallwyl house and the collections into a museum became her life project. She may very well be described as the first director, keeper and curator of the Hallwyl Collection. She was a great custodian of her collection and would see to that her acquisitions were well protected. She hired restorers to attend her art collection. As a custodian of the Hallwyl Collection she displayed excellent collection management. While planning for the future museum she foresaw the importance of the care of the collection. In the statutes of the museum she emphasized on the safety of the objects.

One source to understanding the intention Wilhelmina had with the future museum is the deed of gift to the Swedish state of 1920:

The purpose of the gift is, that the real estate with the personal estate therein contained, shall, for all future time, constitute a museum, accessible to students and other persons interested in the domains of art and applied art. To the end that this museum may for all future time retain its special character confessed by the age and the conditions which have given it birth, we direct, not only that no part of the donated real and personal estate may be sold, exchanged or in any other way come out of possession and disposition of the Swedish Crown. But also that the real estate may not be reconstructed altered or let out or for any other purpose other than that of a museum premise. [...]” and that all the special objects both furniture and objects of art and all other objects shall be placed in the rooms and in the cabinets in the places that they have been determined by us.¹⁴

She was obviously very specific about her gift and wanted the future museum to have a homely character. No rearrangements of the house were to be made. The intention with the museum was to present “*a material as rich and diverse as possible to illuminate my own time as well as the cultures of the past*”.¹⁵ The collection would eventually develop into an ethnological project – all items for everyday use were to be kept and preserved. By preserving the whole house as a museum, the era and the social environment in which she lived would be preserved as well as its values, interests, and norms of her time.

The Catalogue Project

THE ARTWORKS AND the ordinary objects for everyday use would be documented and catalogued in a printed descriptive catalogue. The Hallwyl Catalogue, comprising 78 volumes, describe more than 50 000 objects. The objective with the recording of the collections in the Hallwyl catalogue was to capture the house and the collections for “*all future time*”.¹⁶ It was printed in 110 copies and distributed to museums and libraries in Sweden and abroad. Wilhelmina realized she would not live to see the work completed so in 1921 she founded the *Hallwyl Museum Association*, their main task was to fulfill the work with the Hallwyl Catalogue. The last volume was printed in 1955. She would manage the project until she passed away on the 25th of July in 1930.

The Collection of East Asian Ceramics and Bronzes

THE MAIN PART of the East Asian collection at Hallwyl house consists of Chinese ceramics. Wilhelmina von Hallwyl's interest in East Asian ceramics would connect her to the Swedish Crown Prince Gustaf Adolf. Gustaf (VI) Adolf would begin to collect Chinese ceramics at the turn of the 20th Century. For many years there were frequent contacts between Wilhelmina and the Crown Prince. The Crown Prince was the patron of the exhibition on Chinese art and decorative arts held at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Stockholm, 1914. Wilhelmina von Hallwyl lent out works of art for the exhibition.¹⁷ This was the first extensive exhibition on Chinese art in Sweden. The exhibition was a great success. In the exhibition catalogue of 1914, we find that the Hallwyl Collection (Den Hallwylska samlingen) had lent out a great number of objects to be on display in the exhibition.¹⁸ It is interesting that Wilhelmina von Hallwyl would choose to highlight the Hallwyl Collection as lender. This may indicate her ambition to establish her collection.

It was among the scholars, collectors and connoisseurs of early Chinese art in Sweden that Wilhelmina would be truly acknowledged as a collector and connoisseur. Johan Gunnar Andersson, the Swedish archeologist and first director of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, would honor Wilhelmina von Hallwyl as a collector as well as her collection of East Asian Ceramics and bronzes: "*the outstanding and magnificent collection, to which the Countess is to the very heartiest congratulations*" he would continue "*with the splendid collection of the Countess, the treasures of the Crown Prince and now the East Asian Collections, Stockholm has become a center for the studies of the old Chinese art. The Countess is the ground breaker on this field and should be honored as such.*"¹⁹ By that time, she was a part of a network of a small circle of scholars, collectors and connoisseurs who would concentrate on the early periods of Chinese ceramics and bronzes. The quote highlights Sweden as a center for international studies of ancient Chinese art at that time. The European knowledge about East Asian art objects would develop by the building of private collections. Collectors, scholars and museums would collaborate and be united in the studies of the East Asian culture.

The Crown Prince, who was a role model for many collectors in Sweden visited Wilhelmina to see her collection in 1927. He was accompanied by the British collector and first chairman of the Oriental Ceramic Society, George Eumorfopoulos.

Bukowskis Auction House was the main supplier of Wilhelmina's East Asian objects. Karl Asplund, director of Bukowskis would in his memoirs remember Wilhelmina as the "singular, temperamental and charming lady".²⁰ he got to know when he first began working in the firm. Since ceramics of Han, Tang and Song would be very rare at Bukowskis in the 1920s the exclusive collectors would contact special firms London and Paris as C.T Loo and Yamanaka. When the Japanese firm Yamanaka would exhibit Chinese art objects in the library at the East Asian Collections in Stockholm (13 March – 20 march, 1930) for connoisseurs and collectors, Wilhelmina von Hallwyl received an invitation.²¹ Wilhelmina von Hallwyl acquired twelve Korean mirrors through Yamanaka and company.



Bernhard Österman, 1926. *The China Research Committee*. From left to right: Axel Lagrelius, Johan Gunnar Andersson, Gunnar Andersson, Crown Prince Gustaf (VI) Adolf. Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, National Museums of World Culture/Östasiatiska museet, Statens museer för världskultur.

Conclusion

HOW MAY WE describe Wilhelmina von Hallwyl? She herself wrote in her “*Annual notes*”, that: “*Over the years I have become more determined and I do not yield an inch when I know that I am right and wish to keep my will and my common sense*”²². She would say that “*That I over the years have evolved and become such an independent person is the striking evidence of the fact that upbringing will do so little and that, in the end, nature will find its way*”.²³ If we study Wilhelmina von Hallwyl in a professional perspective, we see that she would manage the museum project and develop the infrastructure of the future museum and manage the staff of experts, photographers, secretaries and artists.

In her *Annual Notes* she emphasized on what she had accomplished; “*it is I, and not Lithberg or Roosval, who will have a say in this house. Not one or the other shall come here and ask what we do, I do not want their advice, as long as I can I will manage the catalogue and my staff. I think that when I have collected everything and paid for everything it shall be as I decide, and my staff knows how everything shall be arranged*”.²⁴ Professor Lithberg had been Wilhelmina von Hallwyl’s protégée ever since she had employed him to lead the excavations at the family estate Schloss Hallwil in Switzerland. She would continue to support him so that he could get his PhD. Furthermore, she funded the Professorship in Ethnology at Stockholm University so that Lithberg could be its first professor. Johnny Roosval, the son-in-law and the second husband of her daughter Ellen, made a career in Academia and became Professor in Art History. In her final years Wilhelmina would describe them both as “*the two gentlemen were both of them unpractical and conceited, although very learned in their respective fields*”.²⁵ She would become somewhat disillusioned and she would think that the men would take the credit of her ideas.

Finally, what do we know about Wilhelmina von Hallwyl’s personal interaction with her collection and her attachment to her collection? In her annual notes she would describe how happy she was when she was working together with her staff cataloguing the collections and preparing for the museum to open. She would say that: “*Ask any person, it may be anyone, what he thinks that the Countess Hallwyl does, he will say that she is sitting in a chair in a drawing room. How many times would my staff see me like that? I laugh and so do they, I would like to see my catalogue and this house if I had not had the motivation and my staff*”.²⁶ The eldest daughter Ebba, would in an article written after her mother had died, describe her mother as a very independent woman who would choose her own path. Ebba would also highlight how much her mother had enjoyed her systematic work of organizing her collections.²⁷

With a combination of passion, visionary ideas and tremendous amount of work and money Wilhelmina von Hallwyl created the Hallwyl Museum. Her wish was that only a Swedish unmarried woman of Protestant faith, with a PhD in art history and the knowledge of at least two foreign languages could be appointed Museum Director of the Hallwyl Museum. She wanted to make sure that the position would go to a woman. Miss Eva Bergman, who had been a hardworking member of the catalogue staff, got her PhD in 1938 and thereby fulfilled all the requirements for the position. She became the first director of the Hallwyl Museum.

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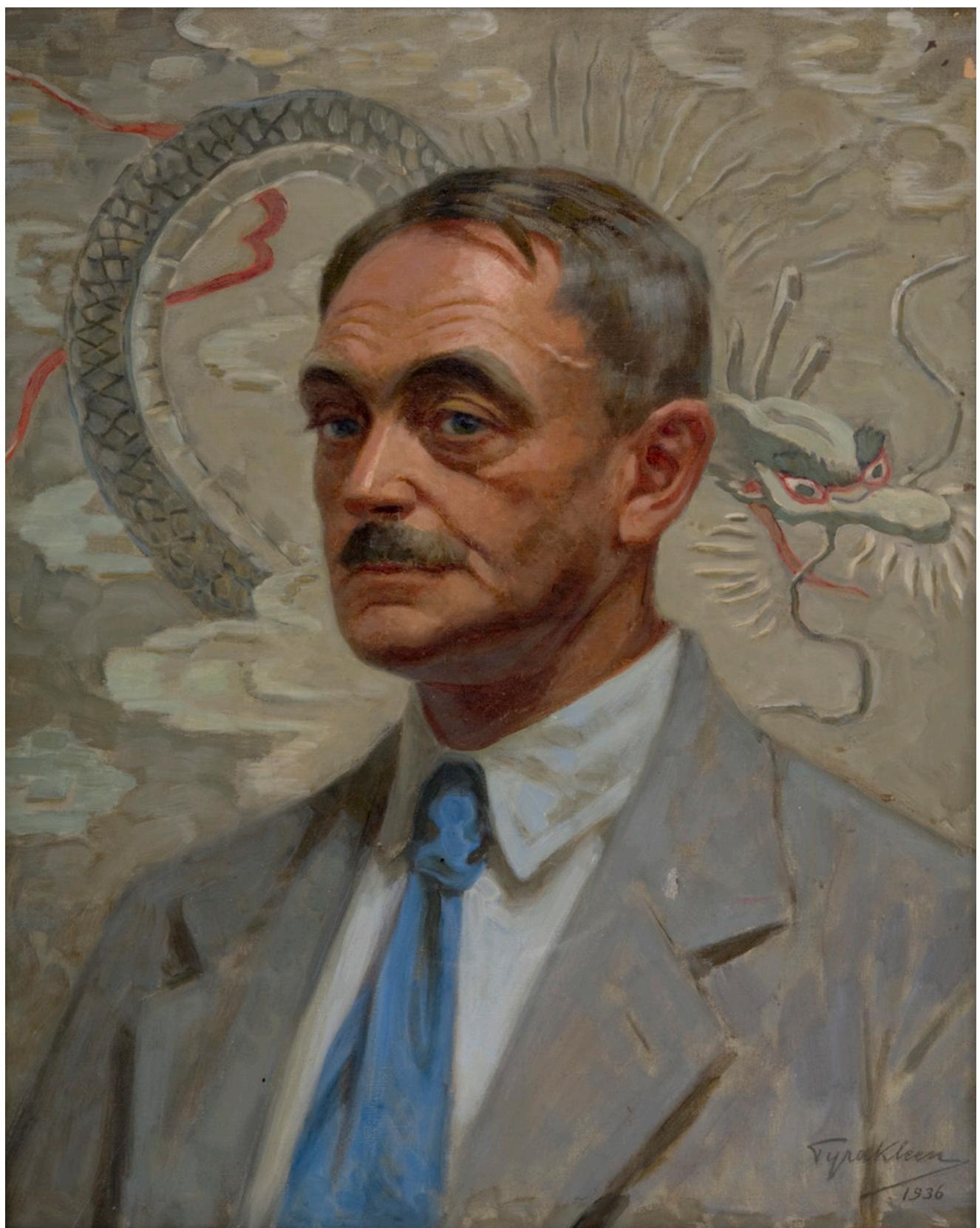
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Notes:

- 1 Årsanteckningar. Skrivmaskintranskribade årsanteckningar (Transcribed Annual Notes), The Hallwyl Museum, pp. 4-5
- 2 Cassel-Piehl, Eva-Helena: *För en långt avlägsen framtid. En bok om Wilhelmina von Hallwyl* (For All Future Time. A book on Wilhelmina von Hallwyl). p.262
- 3 Årsanteckninga. Skrivmaskintranskribade årsanteckningar (Transcribed Annual Notes), The Hallwyl Museum, p.29
- 4 Ibid, p.11
- 5 Ibid, p. 11
- 6 Idun, article: *Grevinnan von Hallwyls mor – en nittioåring som spelade Beethoven* (Countess von Hallwyl's Mother – A Ninety Year Old who played Beethoven), Idun, 1923-05-20. Walther och Wilhelmina von Hallwyls, f. Kempe, private archive (I). Scrap book Johanna Kempe
- 7 Årsanteckningar. Skrivmaskintranskribade årsanteckningar (Transcribed Annual Notes), The Hallwyl Museum, p.105
- 8 Letter written by Ellen Kronberg, Nordiska museets arkiv, Stockholm; Julius och Ellen Kronbergs arkiv
- 9 News article: *Känd folk vid valurnan* (Famous People at the Ballot Box). Walter och Wilhelmina von Hallwyls, f. Kempe, private Archive. Scrap book Wilhelmina von Hallwyl.
- 10 Bracken, Gáldy and Turpin: *Women Patrons and Collectors*, p IX
- 11 Årsanteckningar. Skrivmaskintranskribade årsanteckningar (Transcribed Annual Notes), The Hallwyl Museum, p.58
- 12 Ibid, p. 124
- 13 Ibid, p. 133
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- 24 Ibid, p. 137
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- 26 Ibid, p. 120
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The Engineer who Re-constructed China's Bronze Age in the West

*Orvar Karlbeck and Swedish Research on
China's Early Art and Archaeology*

Eva Aggeklint

[...] what can be more interesting than an ancient mirror? Romance radiates from it, and it needs little skill or imagination to make it the centre of a fascinating story, especially if the inscription tells us that it was an imperial mirror, on it bears the name of one of the famous makers of the Han dynasty.¹

THE SWEDISH RAILROAD engineer Orvar Karlbeck (b. Carlsson 1879–1967) was very interested in antique Chinese bronzes – especially mirrors. He wrote one of his first scientific articles about them.² In one of his autobiographical books he also shares an anecdote that describes a specific Chinese folk traditional use of such mirrors. Karlbeck was in the early 1900s given a rather unusual gift by the directors at the Tianjin-Pukou Rail Road Company. It was a 16th century (Ming dynasty 1368–1644) burial coffin. The coffin was equipped with stands to hold bronze mirrors as light sources in the dark chamber.³ From a modern western perspective a burial coffin presented as a gift may seem odd. Even so, it must be regarded as a great honor to receive this kind of recognition – especially for a westerner. Clearly only a westerner with a great respect for the culture and the people he worked with would receive such a gift. However, what is more interesting than the gift itself is Karlbeck's description of the stands that would hold the bronze mirrors. This is a rarely shared account of a pragmatic usage of antique bronze mirrors and their direct link to the ancient Chinese soul-dualism tradition. According to this idea every living human has a *hun* 魂 (spiritual) soul, which leaves the body after death, and also a *po* 魄 (corporeal) soul, which remains with the corpse of the deceased for some time.⁴ The two concepts have been the key to understanding some important traditional Chinese views of the human soul and the afterlife, still remaining in parts of China. By sharing this anecdote Karlbeck equips us with knowledge about the function of bronze mirrors in funerary rites in China's past.

Introduction

THIS ESSAY GIVES a context to the collection of minor bronzes at the Hallwyl museum. In 1922, the Countess Wilhelmina von Hallwyl (1844–1930), collector of Asian ceramics since the late 1870s, bought this specific collection from Orvar Karlbeck. Two years earlier she had donated her house, its inventories and art collections to the Swedish state to be a museum.

As a background to this scenario it is essential to understand that after the second Opium war (1856–1860), an antique market with Chinese archaeological objects was established both in China and abroad. At the same time China as a nation took the first steps towards a modern archaeology. A small and far away country like Sweden came to be the major player in China's archaeological development and modernisation. This through an unprecedented Chinese-Swedish collaboration in the fields of geology and archaeology in the first decades of the twentieth century. The antique market together with China's opening up and scientific modernisation made western private collectors – long focused on ceramics – turn their eyes to Chinese antiquities. In the 1920s China's bronze age came to be an additionally popular collecting and study object. Orvar Karlbeck played a vital role in this new focus. He worked as district engineer on the railroad between Tianjin and Pukou for over twenty years and was a self-taught expert on ancient Chinese bronzes. Furthermore, as introduced above, Karlbeck was probably the first to publish scientific articles on bronze mirrors and weapons in western languages. His expertise was much appraised, initially, by Johan Gunnar Andersson (1874–1960), the future head of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities (est.1926), who Karlbeck got to know during his years in China, and later by others within this field of research.

Our story concentrates on the years between 1906 and 1930. It begins with Karlbeck travelling to China to find a job as an engineer and ends with the Countess Wilhelmina von Hallwyl passing away in 1930. The so called Karlbeck Syndicate (1930–1934) – an international consortium of seventeen museums and collectors that included George Eumorfopoulos, Oscar Raphael, Charles and Brenda Seligman, Louis Clarke, the Berlin State Museum, the Museum for Asiatic Art in Amsterdam, the British Museum in London, and the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities in Stockholm – is mentioned only briefly. The scholar Valerie Jurgens has already covered the topic of the Karlbeck Syndicate as well as its connections to early collecting and scholarship on Chinese art in her doctoral thesis.⁵ The aim of this essay is therefore to map out Karlbeck's early career to understand how he first got interested in Chinese bronze artefacts and later came to contribute to international research on China's early art and archaeology. The essay further aims at putting new focus on how Karlbeck's contributions has had an impact on how the Chinese bronze age, represented in Western museums, is still of relevance one hundred years later.



Orvar Karlbeck (second from the right) and his student colleagues at the Royal Institute of Technology (ca 1900–1904). Photographer: Unknown.

Engineer Orvar Karlbeck and his way into the Chinese Bronze Age

IN 1904 ORVAR Karlbeck took his degree of Master of Science in Engineering from the Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm. Initially he applied for railroad work on Bergenbanan in Norway. However, destiny had it another way. As in the autumn of 1905, the Russian-Japanese war was over, Karlbeck thought there would probably be new job opportunities in both Korea and Manchuria, since the infrastructure had been destroyed during the war. On January 31st in 1906, he therefore took a train to Bremen and from there he departed by boat to Shanghai. On March 17, after 46 days of travelling, the boat threw anchor in the Huangpu River outside of Shanghai.⁶

Karlbeck arrived in Shanghai in the late years of China's last imperial dynasty and experienced a rather chaotic period in China's history - the fall of the Qing dynasty (1644–1912), the rise of the Republic of China (1912–1949) and civil wars (until 1949). According to Karlbeck the city of "Shanghai had about 600 000 Chinese residents and 6000 Westerners in 1906 when he arrived. Neither cars nor trams existed. The traffic was maintained by small open vehicles, a kind of cart drawn by Mongolian ponies and always with two Chinese drivers on the sideboard. These were called 'mafoos,' and the drums were usually privately owned. Furthermore, there was a diversity of rikshas."⁷

Once in Shanghai, Karlbeck contacted the Swedish consulate for guidance. The Swedish consul general Mr. Hagberg however advised Karlbeck to immediately leave China and seek work in another market, for example America. Karlbeck, however, decided to stay and to learn the Chinese language. It was probably not an attractive choice to travel all the way back to Sweden without having his mission accomplished. Furthermore, in his unpublished memoirs he talks warmly about his first meeting with Chinese art on the home ground. He “had never seen anything like it.” More precisely it was in Gothenburg at a friend’s home that he first got the chance to admire art from China in the form of minor silver objects of rikshas, sampans and pagodas; all of which was new to him and therefore exciting. Another reason for staying in China may therefore have been out of admiration for and curiosity about the Chinese culture.⁸

After a couple of years in Shanghai, working at construction sites, Karlbeck’s life changed again. In 1908 he was employed by the Tianjin-Pukou Rail Road Company, responsible for constructing and maintaining the southern section of the line between Tianjin and Pukou.⁹

Although little is known about how Karlbeck got interested in Chinese bronzes, it is possible to read some of the accounts in his two autobiographical books. *Tsin pu tie lu* was published in 1938 (named after the railroad line he worked on. Transcribed in Hanyu pinyin *Jinpu tielu* 津浦铁路) and *Skattsökare i Kina* was published in 1955 (tr. *Treasure Seeker in China*). Another important account is an unpublished and not completed autobiographical text, authored in 1964, which has helped to map out some important historical information that would otherwise have been left unknown.

Regarding his published memoirs, the first book *Tsin pu tie lu*, mainly deals with his life when working at the railway. However, in the book he also shortly describes how he came into collecting antiquities. This hobby started already when arriving in Shanghai in 1906 as he was strolling around the many curiosity shops in the Chinese area of the city. This means that antiquities were part of the street scenery and could easily trigger specific interest also to foreigners. Antiquarianism and the collecting of antiquities in China, including Bronze Age vessels, were not new practices and the traditional, domestic art market for such goods was well established from the Song period (960–1279) and onwards.¹⁰

According to Karlbeck’s unpublished memoirs, he asked his Chinese language teacher,¹¹ who as it happened was a conservator,¹² to not only teach him the Chinese language but also the rudimentary skills of defining real bronzes from fakes. In *Tsin pu tie lu* Karlbeck reveals the secret: “Rub them with a cloth for a while and then smell them. Do you notice that they do not smell at all, they are old. Smelling, on the other hand, frankly and unpleasantly, you can be sure that they are new.”¹³

When he started working for the Tianjin-Pukou Rail Road Company (north of the city of Nanjing, Jiangsu province) in 1908¹⁴ he continued collecting antiquities and soon dealers started to seek him out to present objects for sale. Over the years Karlbeck



Managing Director and office staff. Head office at the Tianjin-Pukou Rail Road Company. Photographer: Unknown.

purchased antiquities from dealers in different parts of China. Initially he came to particularly specialize in building a collection of minor bronzes from the region of the Huai river valley in Jiangsu and Anhui provinces where he lived and worked.¹⁵

1914 – Stockholm hosts the first Chinese art exhibition in Europe

AFTER EIGHT YEARS in China Karlbeck returned to Sweden for a vacation. He brought with him collections of Chinese bronzes and paintings to Sweden. A newspaper notice announcing that a Chinese art exhibition was to be held at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in the spring of 1914 called for his immediate attention. This exhibition was the first of its kind in Europe, and among the organizers were the Crown Prince Gustaf Adolf and the brothers Carl and Thorsten Laurin at Norstedts and Son's Publishing Ltd. After having scrutinized Karlbeck's Chinese art objects Gustaf Adolf decided to borrow a few for the exhibition. Shortly thereafter Karlbeck was invited to the Royal Castle to see the Crown Prince's East Asian collection. As a matter of fact, this was the start of a long collegial friendship between Gustaf Adolf and Orvar Karlbeck.¹⁶ Interesting to note is that Countess Wilhelmina von Hallwyl also contributed with objects for the Chinese art exhibition in 1914.



Rock Cutting at mile 226 ½. Tianjin-Pukou Railway – the southern section. Photographer: Unknown.

Karlbeck travelled back to China with the Trans-Siberian railway in February 1914. Little did he know about the turns his life would make. He had without knowing much about it taken the first few steps towards playing an important role in the research on early Chinese art and archaeology as a field of study in the west.

The China Research Committee

THE KEY TO the specific development of a scientific interest in China's art and archaeology in Sweden was the geologist Johan Gunnar Andersson. He went to China as an adviser to the Chinese government on questions concerning geology and mining in 1914. Apart from his work in the field of natural sciences, he made some unique archaeological discoveries in Yangshao Village, Henan Province. Andersson was the one who for the first time could prove the existence of a Neolithic culture in China through the finding of advanced painted ceramic potsherds and urns through archaeological excavations. Because of his many successful research results in China in the 1910s it was decided that Andersson's natural science material should be published in a series of monographs with the title *Paleontologia Sinica*. In order to finance his collecting activities in China the Antarctic Support Committee (est. 1913) was reorganized in 1919 and the money was divided between two parts of

which one was focused on Andersson's research projects in China. The new support committee was renamed – the China Research Committee.

The committee had three members. Its first chairman was Admiral Louis Palander af Vega (captain of the famous Swedish polar expeditions). The businessman Axel Lagrelius (1863–1944) was its treasurer and Professor Gunnar Andersson (1865–1928), J.G. Andersson's namesake (Professor of Economic Geography at the Stockholm School of Economics) was its secretary. However, as Admiral Palander passed away already in 1921, the Swedish Crown Prince, later King Gustaf VI Adolf (1882–1973, reign. 1950–73) accepted the position of Chairman of the Research Committee.¹⁷

With Andersson's discoveries in the village of Yangshao the focus of the Committee's interest soon changed to financing archaeological research. The new Chairman Gustaf Adolf could not be more pleased since he had studied history, Nordic archaeology and Egyptology at Uppsala University and had himself participated in archaeological excavations. Moreover, he was a dedicated collector of Chinese antiquities since the early 1900s and had, as we have seen, been one of the main organizers of the first Chinese art exhibition in Europe a few years earlier in 1914.¹⁸

Antique shopping street, probably Liulichang street. Early 1900s. Photographer: Probably Orvar Karlbeck.



Orvar Karlbeck and the Hallwyl Museum

WHEN WORKING AS a district engineer Karlbeck was moving his accomodation along the railway line in Jiangsu and Anhui provinces. When living in Bengbu, Anhui province he started buying bronzes that originated from the kingdom of Chu, located there during the late Warring States period (475–221 BC). The area was rich in cultural relics from this period and he thus slowly built up a research collection. This, his first collection of minor bronzes was sold to the Countess Wilhelmina von Hallwyl in 1922.¹⁹ He describes the origin of this particular collection in the following words: “A number of objects now in the Hallwyl collection were acquired at Ku-shih Hsien [Gushi xian], an ancient town in the eastern part of Honan [Henan], not far away from the Anhui border, but the greater part was discovered at Shou Chou [Shouzhou], a city on a tributary of the Huaiho [Huai river], in the western part of Anhui.”²⁰

In his unpublished memoirs Karlbeck further tells us how he, in 1921, when travelling back to Sweden for a second vacation brought with him this collection of minor bronzes. It contained early Chinese mirrors, weapons, chariot fittings and belt hooks among many other things.²¹ Letters in the Karlbeck syndicate archive reveal that the idea of offering parts of Karlbeck’s collections to a Swedish museum was presented to him by Johan Gunnar Andersson. In a letter dated to the 15th of February 1921 Andersson writes:

Last night I had the opportunity to speak to our Minister [probably Envoyé David Bergström 1858–1946] and told him about your collections of old ceramics and bronzes. I pointed out, that both of these collections have an almost outstanding value because You know the provenance and have worked your way into the question of dating the objects in a quite outstanding way. I emphasized how interesting it would be if these collections could be acquired in Swedish museums.²²

In another letter from the same year dated the 14th of August it becomes clear that Andersson, the Crown Prince Gustaf Adolf and Axel Lagrelius all supported the idea that the above mentioned collection of minor bronzes should be added to a Swedish museum collection.²³ Reading between the lines one can assume that the idea was to contribute with adding knowledge about China’s bronze age to museum collections. However, to some extent, it also seems to have been part of one of Andersson’s greater aims “to arouse a nationalist fighting spirit, to make little Sweden feel like they in China really could stand up against the great powers in the world.”²⁴

When back in Sweden Karlbeck therefore initially contacted the National Museum²⁵ who already had a collection of Chinese art and therefore could be interested. The National Museum indeed wanted the collection but only if the state could find sponsorship to buy it. Due to some fortunate coincidences Countess Wilhelmina von Hallwyl reported interest and purchased the collection. According to Karlbeck’s unpublished memoirs the Countess’ son-in-law [not named in Karlbeck’s text, but it was probably art historian Professor Johnny Roosvall] had participated at one of his lectures on China’s early art and archaeology at the National Museum. The bronze

collection had been on display during the lecture for the audience to admire and study closer.²⁶ It is possible to assume that for the Countess as a passionate collector of Chinese ceramics, such a collection of minor bronzes would add depth to her growing collection of Asian ceramics.

During this period both private and public collections as well as a number of collector's clubs were formed in Europe to discuss different aspects of Chinese art. Those were, the Oriental Ceramic Society in London, Kinaklubben (the China Club) in Sweden, the Vereeniging van Vrienden van Aziatische Kunst (Friends of Asian Art Society) in The Netherlands and the Gesellschaft für Ostasiatische Kunst (Society for East Asian Art) in Germany.²⁷ As far as this author knows, Countess Wilhelmina von Hallwyl was never a member of the China Club (Kinaklubben) in Sweden. It was clearly a men's club consisting of seventeen gentlemen.²⁸ She was however often invited as a distinguished guest to lectures and meetings on East Asian art and archaeology.

Karlbeck was later employed as an expert to author the Hallwyl museum catalogue of the collection of *Chinese and Korean Bronzes* (1938) as well as the catalogue of the collection of *Ceramic art of China and other countries of the Far East* (1949). In her annual notes it becomes clear that Wilhelmina von Hallwyl held Karlbeck in high esteem, predominantly talking about him as "China scholar."²⁹

The year of 1926 was a year of great significance for the development of Swedish research on East Asian art and archaeology not only due to the opening of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities but also because of the Crown Prince's journey to China. Let us therefore turn our focus to the year of 1926.

The Crown Prince Gustaf Adolf and Crown Princess Louise visiting the Ming tombs, Peking in 1926.
The Archives of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities.



The Swedish Crown Prince's Journey to China in 1926

AFTER MANY YEARS of planning the Crown Prince and the Crown Princess embarked on a world-wide-tour during which they had the chance to visit Japan, Korea and China. In China they stayed for one month and were escorted by Johan Gunnar Andersson and Axel Lagrelius. The journey started in Peking where they made some important stops. Thereafter they travelled by train to Shanxi to visit geologist Professor Erik Nyström by whom they had been invited. Nyström was at the time the head of the Nyström Institute of Scientific Research at the provincial university in Taiyuan. He had helped Gustaf Adolf to collect antiquities, predominantly ceramics, from the Shanxi region. The Royal party also went to Tianjin where they visited the scholar and collector Luo Zhenyu (1866–1940). Thereafter they continued southwards to Puchen, close to Pukou and Nanjing, to visit Orvar Karlbeck at his home.

The preparations for the Royal visit to Karlbeck's home in Puchen is described in his book *Tsin pu tie lu*. The railway was not safe, because of robbers active along the line. To secure the safety of the Royal Party, travelling with Johan Gunnar Andersson and Axel Lagrelius, Karlbeck made arrangements with the Chinese railway director to have an armoured train escorting the train the Royals were travelling with. No less than thirty-two armed soldiers also travelled with them to Puchen to make certain the Royals arrived safely.³⁰ While at Karlbeck's home “to favour his motherland's East Asian Museum” Karlbeck sold a number of minor bronzes originating from the Chu kingdom (ca 500–400 BC). The people of Chu were of non-Chinese origin and lived in the area of the southern Yangtze river and had developed a particularly distinguished art style, which Karlbeck through his research made known to the world.³¹ Importantly, the Crown prince who had until this visit been predominantly interested in collecting ceramics was after having scrutinized Karlbeck's fine collection widening his scope of collecting to also include bronzes, something which gave an echo to other collectors – nationally and internationally.³²

As we have seen political instability in China in 1927 forced Karlbeck and his family to flee from China and return to Sweden. However, already in 1928 he returned, this time sponsored by the China Research Committee to purchase objects for The Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities. The Crown Prince thought that Karlbeck's expertise would contribute very well to the building of a first class research collection in Stockholm. Karlbeck's first expedition of 1928 was organised by Axel Lagrelius, the China Research Committee's treasurer. It was after the success of this first journey in 1928, that Lagrelius founded the Karlbeck Syndicate, during which Karlbeck added minor bronzes of Huai and Han to the collections of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, who has the largest collection of such bronzes in the world.³³ Karlbeck was employed by the Karlbeck Syndicate to make three more collecting expeditions predominantly for museums and private collectors between the years 1930 and 1934.

Orvar Karlbeck's scholarly contributions

WHEN KARLBECK STARTED collecting it was clearly out of personal interest in the objects he collected. He systematically selected sets of objects to create a certain kind of sequences to be able to understand the objects in the time in which they were made. Jurgens has noted that subjects like ancient mirrors and early weapons were not part of the traditional intellectual repertoire for the study of Chinese bronzes at the time. The main focus was predominantly on ritual bronze vessels and their inscriptions. When Karlbeck started collecting minor bronzes in the late 1910s and early 1920s he was thus one of the first to systematically form collections of these types.³⁴ As Karlbeck was educated at the Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm it is possible to assume that especially the Chinese bronze objects triggered his intellectual interest in casting techniques and the advanced technological skills of the bronze object makers. This separated him from ordinary dealers with the motivation to sell only.

In the mid- 1920s Karlbeck further started publishing his studies on early Chinese bronzes in a couple of short articles. The two articles "Ancient Chinese Bronze Weapons" (1925) and "Notes on some Early Chinese Bronze Mirrors" (1926) were published in the *China Journal of Science and Arts*. These made him the first to discuss such objects in a Western language.³⁵

Orvar Karlbeck and Ni Yulin, dealer of Chinese antiquities in Peking, admiring an antique ritual bronze vessel on four legs for wine. Probably the early 1930s. Photographer: Unknown.



In all Karlbeck wrote twenty-seven articles on Chinese art and archaeology, including the two above mentioned catalogues for the Hallwyl Museum, between 1923 and 1967.³⁶ His scientific articles were all based on self-studies on the objects of his collections. He published predominantly in English, which not only shows that English was the *lingua franca* in scholarly circles at the time, as suggested by Jurgens,³⁷ but rather that he himself was eager to reach out to the international research community and to be able to take an active part in the discourse on East Asian art and archaeology. At the time these topics were of great concern to all in the modern world – perhaps even pin pointing them as modern in the sense that this research included new knowledge about a less known culture in the world.³⁸ Karlbeck was a dedicated collector and his research led him to share his knowledge, passion and admiration of Chinese art to western scholars and collectors not only by giving lectures on the topic in Sweden but also in the UK and the US until he was well in to his 80s.³⁹ In 1953 Karlbeck was further prestigiously invited by the art historian Max Loehr to contribute with an article for the American scholarly journal *Ars Orientalis* dedicated to art history, which defines him as one of the important scholars of early Chinese art and archaeology of the time.⁴⁰

Karlbeck did some interesting innovations in the research of China's bronze age objects especially during the time he still resided in China. Initially Karlbeck focused

A part of Karlbeck's collection of Chinese antiquities at his home, Anhui province in the 1920s.
Photographer: Probably Orvar Karlbeck.





Orvar Karlbeck in a tent close to the Mongolian King Sunit Wangs palace in Mongolia in the summer of 1930. Photographer: Probably Frans August Larsson 'Duke Larson'.

on classifying his collections in a coherent systematic manner. Description, dating and provenance preceded any further historical analysis. From the start he requested data from students or collectors which could help him in his own research. Karlbeck was as mentioned also the first to call attention to the bronze mirrors he collected when living in the Huai river valley. He borrowed the term Huai-style, for the Huai-style mirrors he got particularly interested in, from sinologist Bernhard Karlgren (1889–1978). Regarding those he addressed the evolution of casting technology, design and origin. Chinese bronze mirrors had already been the subject of interest to Chinese collectors for centuries. The first studies on the mirrors can be found in Chinese literature of the Song period, containing illustrations of mirrors from the Han period and onwards. Karlbeck, who could read Chinese used available Chinese language sources in his research. He recognised that it was essential to understand the makers of these objects through studying also the Chinese sources.⁴¹

Importantly, the data gathered by collectors and scholars, like Karlbeck residing in China for a longer period of time, contributed to providing important historical and archaeological data that would probably otherwise have been lost. The westerners involved in this early work all shared the admiration for the refined and exquisite craftsmanship of China's bronze age, still available to see and study in China as well as at museums around the world today. Not only do such collections add layers of knowledge to the histories of the bronze age, but they also invite us to understand something about the needs these objects filled in people's lives in the societies they were made for.



Orvar Karlbeck, portrait. Date: ca 1910s to 1920s. Photographer: Probably Orvar Karlbeck's wife Sigrid (b. Wennberg, 1883–1957).

A few words on the time after 1928

THE GROWING WESTERN demand for objects of China's archaic past coincided with the excavations at Anyang in the late 1920s. The first scientific excavations at the late Shang dynasty capital Anyang were executed by the Chinese *Academia Sinica* (National Research Institute of History and Philology). Anyang was a site of high importance for the Bronze Age and the excavations 1928–1937 were led by the Chinese Geologist Li Ji (1896–1979) who had just returned from Harvard University where he had finished his dissertation on anthropology.⁴² The excavations at Anyang were important since they linked China's literary history to material culture. Starting with the excavations in Anyang Li Ji developed the field of modern archaeology in China. In the 1930s when back in China working for the Karlbeck Syndicate, Li Ji welcomed Karlbeck into his home to discuss some of the interesting archaeological discoveries in Anyang. This shows that Karlbeck's expertise as a collecting scholar specialising on Chinese archaeological objects was quite unique and in great demand.

Another friend of Karlbeck's defined the true collector in the following words:

The true collector is not content with the mere acquisition of a number of objects, no matter how rare and costly they may be, but is also interested in their origin, their history, and the turns of fortune that have followed them through the ages. [...]⁴³

Orvar Karlbeck was indeed such a collector. His role within the academic circle that set the foundations to the study of Chinese art and archaeology in the west is difficult to neglect.⁴⁴ It is interesting to note that Karlbeck with the support of the China Research Committee re-constructed the Chinese Bronze Age at two places in Sweden in the 1920s – the Hallwyl House and the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities. At the time Sweden's sinological community was at the forefront with research on China's past. Just think what a small circle of people can do to help us broaden our perspectives of the world.

Note

Special gratitude goes to Orvar Karlbeck's relatives for generously sharing their own memories, family photo albums and an unpublished and not completed text by Orvar Karlbeck authored in 1964.

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- 1 R. Swallow, Ancient Chinese Bronze Mirrors, Peiping 1937, p. 23.
- 2 See Orvar Karlbeck, "Notes on some early Chinese bronze mirrors," *China Journal of Science and Arts* IV (1) (Month 1926), pp. 3–9.
- 3 Orvar Karlbeck, *Skattsökare i Kina (Treasure Seeker in China)*, Stockholm 1955, p. 27.
- 4 Baldrian-Hussein Farzeen, "Hun and po 魂•魄 Yang soul(s) and Yin soul(s); celestial soul(s) and earthly soul(s)," in *The Encyclopedia of Taoism*, Fabrizio Pregadio, ed., 2008, pp. 406–409. The ideas of how the *hun* and *po* souls correspond to one another were first described in the historical work *Zuo Zhuan* (左传 Zuo's commentary) compiled by Zuo Qimeng, not later than 386 BC. The *Zuo Zhuan* is the earliest Chinese historical writing and covers the years 722–468 BC. It is one of three commentaries of *Chunqiu* 春秋 (*Spring and Autumn Annals*).
- 5 See Valerie Jurgens, *The Karlbeck Syndicate 1930–1934 – Collecting and Scholarship on Chinese Art*, Saarbrücken 2010. This essay has benefited greatly from Jurgens' insightful analysis on Orvar Karlbeck's scholarly contributions.
- 6 Orvar Karlbeck, *Unpublished memoirs*, 1964, p. 28–32.
- 7 Karlbeck, 1964, p. 33.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 Ibid. pp. 34–37.
- 10 Ibid. p.116. See also Craig Clunas, *Art in China*, Oxford 2009, pp. 173–175.
- 11 The teacher was a man from Beijing who had accompanied Armand David known as Père David 1826–1900, a French Catholic priest who was also a zoologist and a botanist, on his expeditions in Western China, Karlbeck, 1964, p. 35.
- 12 Karlbeck, 1964, p. 35.
- 13 Karlbeck, *Tsin pu tie lu*, Stockholm 1938, p. 84. See also Jurgens, pp. 76–77.
- 14 In May 1899, the Qing government agreed to the financing of a railway construction along with a series of bank loans. Construction of the railway began in 1908 and the Tianjin–Pukou railway was completed in 1912. Altogether, the original railway line was built with 85 stations, of which 31 were in Shandong province.
- 15 Karlbeck, *Tsin pu tie lu*, Stockholm 1938 and *Skattsökare i Kina (Treasure Hunter in China)* Stockholm 1955.
- 16 Ibid. p. 48
- 17 Jan Romgard, *Polarforskaren som strandade i Kina: Johan Gunnar Andersson & de svenska Asienexpeditionerna* [The Polar Researcher who got Stranded in China: Johan Gunnar Andersson & the Swedish Expeditions in Asia], Stockholm 2018, p. 139; Mette Siggstedt, "The Collection of Shang Bronzes in the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities: A History," in *MFEA Bulletin* No. 77, Stockholm 2009, p. 50.
- 18 Romgard, pp. 170–173 and 184; Siggstedt, pp. 49–73; Frederick Whitling, "Vår höge ordförande" Gustaf VI Adolf, *Kinakommittén och Östasiatiska samlingarna*. Gustaf Adolf som samlare och konässör ["Our Honourable Chairman" Gustaf VI Adolf, *The China Research Committée and the East Asian Collections*], in *Kungens gåva*. Gustaf VI Adolfs gåva till Svenska folket [The King's Gift: Gustaf VI Adolf's gift to the Swedish People] *Östasiatiska museets utställningskatalog/Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities Exhibition Catalogue* No. 69, 2013, pp. 53–72.
- 19 Siggstedt, p. 52.
- 20 Karlbeck, "Introduction" in Catalogue of the Collection of Chinese and Korean Bronzes at Hallwyl House, p. 9.
- 21 Karlbeck, 1964, p. 60.
- 22 Andersson J.G. "Letter to Karlbeck, 15 February, 1921." Volume IX. The Karlbeck Syndicate Archive.

- 23 Andersson J.G. "Letter to Karlbeck, 14 August, 1921." Volume IX. The Karlbeck Syndicate Archive.
- 24 Romgard, p. 155.
- 25 When the National Museum opened in 1866 the National History Museum was situated at the ground floor. See *Forskning vid museer* [Research at Museums] ed. Fredrik Svanberg, Stockholm 2011, p. 114.
- 26 Karlbeck, 1964, p. 60–61.
- 27 Jurgens, p. 5.
- 28 The members were: Johannes Hellner, Crown Prince Gustaf Adolf, Anders Hellström, Holger Lauritzen, Gustaf Lindberg, Axel Lundgren, Anders Norberg, Nils Palmgren, Ivan Traugott, Gerard Versteegh, Emil Hultmark, Richard Hultmark, Carl Kempe, Axel Lagrelius, Johannes Norberg, Orvar Karlbeck and Hans Öström.
- 29 Wilhelmina von Hallwyl, *Annual notes*, Hallwyl Museum Archive, p. 124.
- 30 Karlbeck, 1938, pp. 165–166; Karlbeck, 1964, pp. 65–66. See also: Sten Lewenhaupt, *Axel Lagrelius' Kina-resa av honom själv berättad för Sten Lewenhaupt* [Sten Lewenhaupt, Axel Lagrelius' China Journey] Stockholm 1928, pp. 278–279.
- 31 Lewenhaupt, p. 279.
- 32 Karlbeck, 1938, pp. 165–166; Karlbeck, 1964, pp. 65–66. See also: Lewenhaupt, pp. 278–279 and *Program for the Visit to China of Their Royal Highnesses The Crown Princess of Sweden*, Bernadotteska Familjearkivet/BFA Gustaf VI Adolfs Arkiv, Volume 35, 1926–1927, Nils Rudebecks samling kring uppehället i Japan, Kina och Indien, dagsprogram, båtlegenheter etc.
- 33 Bo Gyllensvärd, "Samlingarnas tillkomst [Origin of the Collections]" in *Kinesisk konst: en konstbok från Nationalmuseum* [Chinese Art: A Book on Art from the National Museum], 1959, pp. 13–18.
- 34 Jurgens, s. 122–123. See also Siggstedt, pp. 52–53.
- 35 Jurgens, p. 123; Siggstedt, p. 52.
- 36 A list of Karlbeck's articles can be found in the bibliography at the back. For more information see also: Bo Gyllensvärd, "In Memoriam: Orvar Karlbeck (1879–1967)," *Archives of American Art* 21 (1967/1968), pp. 6–7. Jan Wirgin, "Orvar Karlbeck," *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society* 37 (1967–69), p. xv. Jan Wirgin, "Orvar Karlbeck," *Oriental Art* 16, no. 3 (Spring 1968), p. 221.
- 37 Jurgens, p. 121.
- 38 Karlbeck, 1938, pp. 165–166; Karlbeck, 1964, pp. 65–66. See also: Lewenhaupt, pp. 278–279.
- 39 Karlbeck 1964, p. 108.
- 40 Max Loehr, 'New Year card to Karlbeck, dated 1953,' *The Karlbeck Syndicate Archives. Ars Orientalis* is sponsored by the Department of Art History of the University of Michigan and the Freer Gallery of Art of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington DC. See Jurgens, p. 122. In 1964 Karlbeck was especially invited as a specialist of Chinese bronzes to compile the catalogue of ritual bronzes at the Freer Gallery. Karlbeck, 1964, p. 107. The Freer Gallery homepage does however not address Karlbeck's academic contributions to the field but only points out his different roles as engineer, collector and dealer especially during the years of the Karlbeck Syndicate 1930–1934. See <https://www.freersackler.si.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/09//Karlbeck-Orvar.pdf>. For more information on the critique towards collectors, especially sinologists, of the early 1900s see Perry Johansson, *Sinofilerna-Kinakunskap, samlande och politik från Sven Hedin till Jan Myrdal* [The Sinophiles: China-knowledge, Collecting and Politics from Sven Hedin to Jan Myrdal] (2008) and *Saluting the Yellow Emperor—A Case of Swedish Sinography*, Brill (2012).
- 41 Jurgens, pp. 125–126.
- 42 Romgard, pp. 276–77, 287, 316 and 321; Jurgens p. 104.
- 43 Swallow, p. 23. See also Jurgens p. 121.
- 44 For more information about Orvar Karlbeck's scholarly contributions see Karlbeck's publication list.



Part of the Huai River near Chuzhou, Anhui province. Date: Unknown. Photographer: Probably Orvar Karlbeck.

Introduction to Archaic Chinese Bronzes and the Bronze Age of China

Michel Lee

CHINA ENTERED THE Bronze Age during the Shang dynasty (c. 1600–1046 BCE), the first dynasty that has been archaeologically proven through contemporary writings, thanks to China's unbroken textual tradition since a writing system was developed by 1200 BCE. Bronze, a revolutionary material throughout the world, was utilized for its durability and ability to be cast into various shapes and its ability to be honed to a relatively sharp edge. In early China, bronze was used for making weapons, ceremonial musical instruments, such as bells, and more uniquely, for ceremonial vessels that were used for making sacrifices to royal ancestors. The bronze ceremonial vessels were extremely important for the rulers of the Central Plains, the area often seen as the heartland of Chinese civilization, as they allowed the ruler to send offerings to his ancestors. The royal ancestors had the ability to bestow positive affects on the land and people if they were properly treated. Therefore, the bronze vessels were a tool with which the rulers used to rule and, in this way, gave the ruler legitimacy to rule.

Unlike other Bronze Age civilizations throughout the world, the early bronze civilization in China generally did not use the material for personal adornment until later in the Bronze Age, particularly during the Eastern Zhou period (770–256 BCE). The Zhou was the dynasty that succeeded the Shang dynasty. The first part is known as the Western Zhou (c. 1045–771 BCE), and the second part, when the capital was moved from Haojing (present-day Xi'an in Shaanxi province) eastwards to Luoyi (present-day Luoyang in Henan province), is known as the Eastern Zhou. The Eastern Zhou is further divided into the Spring and Autumn period (771–476 BCE) and the Warring States period (475–221 BCE). The late Chinese Bronze Age was a time when the *fengjian* (封建) system (often compared with the European feudal system) was collapsing and the individual vassal states that were theoretically subservient to the Zhou ruling household accumulated power and waged war amongst themselves and eventually even against the Zhou itself. The state of Qin ultimately conquered the various warring states and founded the short-lived Qin dynasty (221–206 BCE). For the first time in Chinese history, the various states were unified into one country, giving birth to the concept of China.

The meaning of the bronze material may have changed through the Chinese Bronze Age, but its high value as a material continued to be prized. Tin, copper and lead are the main ingredients for casting bronze. The Shang was not the only culture to work with bronze, but they were the dominant culture, judging by the sophistication of their bronze work and the influence of Shang forms amongst the material culture of the peripheral cultures. The Shang, with their home range in Central China, needed to control or influence vast trade and communication networks that stretched to the southern areas of modern-day China in order to have access to the amount tin and

copper needed to fulfill their appetite for bronze. The ability to influence or control trade demonstrates the power of the Shang civilization. This, in combination with the functions and symbolism of the bronze vessels, demonstrates the power of the owner of bronze objects.

During the Shang dynasty, bronze, especially bronze vessels, were still extremely exclusive and demonstrated the power and ability of the royal elite. The Western Zhou period (1041–771 BCE), which was the first part of the Zhou dynasty, has a slightly different bronze vessel assemblage, indicating a change in ritual practice. By the Eastern Zhou period, the second part of the Zhou dynasty, bronze became more available and wealthy classes used bronze as a status material by making ornaments that reflect the status of the owner and even commissioned sets of ceremonial vessels for themselves. The bronze vessels, which were earlier inscribed with the titles of the ancestors to which they were made for, later records the accomplishments of the living person that commissioned them. Luxury objects and personal adornments, such as garment hooks, were being made from bronze for those who could afford them. No longer was bronze a material used mainly by royalty to communicate with their ancestors. They were used also by local rulers and other elite to demonstrate their wealth and status, which also reflects a change in elite society and the decentralization of power. As the Zhou dynasty itself became weaker, powerful individuals used bronze to show off their wealth and status.

The majority of the small bronzes in the Hallwyl Museum's collection come from the late Bronze Age and reflects the time of the breakdown of the feudal system in China. The large ceremonial vessels are noticeably absent from the collection. As the collection represents small, often personal, bronzes, it is natural that it reflects the story of the later Chinese Bronze Age. There are also objects in the collection that date to after the Bronze Age of China, particularly dating to the Han dynasty (202 BCE–220 CE), which is divided into the Western Han (206 BCE–9 CE) and the Eastern Han (25CE –220 CE). The Han was the second imperial dynasty of China, after the Qin. The latest objects, mainly some of the mirrors, date to as late as the Song dynasty (960–1279).

The archaic Chinese bronzes in the collection of the Hallwyl Museum have come from burials. It was (and continues to be in many Chinese communities) the belief that the dead continued to live an afterlife and required many of the same things as the living. Rulers still needed an army, and generals still needed weapons. Most of the objects used in burials during the bronze age were fully functional. Smaller models, such as miniature sword fitting, were sometimes used to represent the full-scale object. The objects in this catalogue have been categorized into six different categories: horses and chariots, weapons, tools, personal adornments, mirrors and other small treasures. Some of the objects could have overlapping categories. When possible, the spelling of locations used by Orvar Karlbeck has been updated to the modern Hanyu Pinyin system of romanization. When it was not possible to find a location on a modern map, Karlbeck's spelling, based on the Wade-Giles system, was kept and placed within quotation marks.

Horse and Chariots

Michel Lee

The Domestic Horse in China

LIKE IN OTHER parts of the world, the introduction of the domestic horse into China greatly impacted the civilization. They facilitated migration and trade and changed warfare. They were even used for ancestral and tomb sacrifices. Spoked wheels and copper-bronze metallurgy appears to have arrived in the present-day boundaries of China along with the domestic horse. The horse was not only used as a means of transport, nourishment, and sacrifice, it also facilitated communication and the spread of information. It helped facilitate interaction between the culture of the Central Plain (中原) region of China.¹ This is the region that the Han Chinese, the ethnic majority of China, consider as the cradle of their civilization.

The domestication of the horse first occurred in the Eurasian Steppe. Although there are earlier indirect evidences of the domestication of these animals, the earliest known definitive proof of fully-fledged domestication comes from chariot burials from the Ural Mountains at the sites of Sintashta and Petrovka, located along the present-day border of Russia and Kazakhstan. These sites date to about 2100–1700 BCE and also contain the oldest known chariots in the world.²

Domestic horses probably spread from the West into the heartland of China through present-day Gansu and Qinghai provinces from far western Xinjiang province.³ The Hexi Corridor, laying in this region, is a string of oases between the high Tibetan plateau to the south and the Gobi Desert and Mongolian grasslands to the north. It has been an important link between China and the West since ancient times. Like in the Near East, the earliest direct evidence of domesticated horses was from horse and chariot burials discovered in Anyang, the site of the ancient capital of the Shang dynasty (c. 1600–1064 BCE). These remains date to about 1200 BCE, during the Bronze Age of China. Horseback riding within a cavalry context started in the Central Plain by the 4th century BCE.⁴

Chariots

A CHARIOT IS composed of three main sections: a chariot box where the driver and up to two additional warriors ride in, an axel with two spoked wheels, and a harness assemblage. These vehicles were pulled by at least two horses that were harnessed to a draught pole in the centre.⁵ According to traditional sources, such as the *Shuowen Jiezi* (Explaining Graphs, Analysing Characters) that was written during the early second century, the chariot was invented by Minister Xi Zhong during the legendary Xia dynasty. However, archaeological evidence paints a different story. Chariots appeared

abruptly in the archaeological record of China and were already fully-formed when by the time they were first used around 1200 BCE⁶, probably around the time the domesticated horse was introduced. The earliest Chinese chariots were essentially the same as the earlier chariots in the Near East, and therefore were probably copied from Near Eastern models.⁷ Before the introduction of the horse and chariot, China did not make use of wheels for transportation or animals for pulling.

During the Shang dynasty, the locations of chariot burials in relation to tombs that are assumed to be royal suggest chariots were prestige items mainly used by kings.⁸ Shang chariots were used for displaying status, hunting, and to a limited degree, military purposes. Within the military context, they were probably used as mobile command platforms to direct infantry and were not used directly in combat.⁹ Two horses were used to pull a chariot at this time.¹⁰ Although the chariot was first used while the Shang people were dominant, it may be possible that the Zhou people, who later conquered the Shang, that were the first to use horses and chariots.¹¹

The number of horses and chariots interred in burial pits increase during the Western Zhou period of the Zhou dynasty (c. 1046–256 BCE). Chariots started to be used directly in warfare, and four horse-drawn chariots start to appear.¹² Six-horse-drawn chariots started to appear in the Eastern Zhou period (770–256 BCE).¹³ At this period in history, the strength of a state was judged by the number of chariots on the battlefield, which could have been between six hundred and four thousand chariots.¹⁴ Regardless of the number of horses used to pull chariots, the essential design of the chariot design remained the same.

Mass chariot battles started by the second half of the 9th century BCE (Western Zhou period) and reached a height during the Spring and Autumn period (771–476 BCE)¹⁵, which means that there were more people utilizing chariots in battle than only those associated with royalty. The class of people that would have battled with chariots were soldiers or army men *shi* (士) – the lower elite of Zhou society. Chariot fittings diminish in tombs during the middle to late Spring and Autumn period (first half of the Western Zhou), and they no longer reflected the official rank of the tomb occupant. The presence of chariot fittings was there to show wealth rather than rank. Even the tombs of lower ranking *shi* nobles can contain horses and chariots.¹⁶ It has been recorded during the Western Zhou that King Mu gave a chariot and chariot fittings, among other gifts, to a follower¹⁷, which could boost the receiver's social standing. Rather than chariots being exclusive to people with high hereditary rankings, they now become status objects for people that may not have been born with a high status. These are evidences of the social changes taking place during the late Bronze Age of China, which eventually ended with the downfall of the old “feudal” system of the Chinese Bronze Age society.

Bronze Chariot Fittings and Horse Tack

BRONZE CHARIOT FITTINGS and horse tack tend to survive better than the organic parts of the equipment due to the durable nature of the material. Much of the bronzes, particularly the chariot fittings, were more about their visual appearance rather than functionality. Certain parts, such as horse bits and rings meant to organize reigns, had practical reasons for being made from bronze. However, the highly decorative nature of some of the material was used for the showing status of the owner or perhaps also to intimidate the enemy. When new, the polished bronze pieces would have had a bright, gold-coloured shine, which probably gave a sense of awe to the viewers. Perhaps a chariot or horse fully-equipped with bronze fittings could be seen as the Bronze Age equivalent of a flashy sports car.

The *Shi* (士) Charioteers: From Warriors to Administrators and Scholars

DURING THE SHANG dynasty (16th century–c. 1046 BCE), chariots were associated with royalty and aristocracy and were mainly a status object. In the ancient Shang dynasty capital 殷墟 near present-day Anyang in Henan province, all the pits that contained horses and chariots were associated with royal or aristocratic tombs.¹⁸ When the chariots were introduced to China, they were a sign of status only for the upper classes. Since the beginning of the Spring and Autumn period (771–456 BCE) of the Eastern Zhou dynasty (770–256 BCE), horse and chariot fittings appear in tombs of people from the *shi* class.¹⁹ The *shi* were a lower class of aristocratic men that could hold either military or civil roles and were the class of people that became charioteers.

During the Eastern Zhou, many *shi* competed to offer advice to the various rulers of the competing states. It was during this time that there was a flowering of intellectual thought in China, including the fundamental ideas that developed into Confucianism, Daoism and Legalism.²⁰ There was a flowering of intellectual thought throughout the ancient world during these centuries, with the appearance of people such as Aristotle and Plato. Confucius (551–479 BCE) himself, whose name is so familiar in the Western world today, was born into the *shi* class and traveled from ruler to ruler promoting his ideas that became highly influential in the development of Chinese and East Asian (including Vietnam) world-views to this day.

By the 4th century BCE, there were many *shi* that lacked military skills and moved into government administration. When one state was conquered by another, the nobility of the loosing state was lowered to the *shi* class.²¹ During the Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE), the *shi* had become educated elite and became scholars and politicians, divorced from their former military role.²²



Horse Bit (Snaffle Bit Xian 鑿)

Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE) or earlier

Reportedly discovered in Shouzhou (centered in present-day Shou County, Anhui province)

XLIX:I:B.a.01.

A horse bit, along with the bridle and reins, are used by the rider to communicate with the horse. The rider can apply pressure to the horse's mouth through the bit in order to direct the horse. Snaffle bits are composed of two sections, each with a bar in the center with two rings on either end. One ring is smaller than the other. The two small rings are interlocked, connecting the two pieces together. Their basic design remains the same today. There are linear patterns that twist around the two large rings, giving a rope-like appearance.

There is wear around both of the interlocking small rings, as well as the large rings on either end. This is evidence that this bit was well-used before it was buried in the ground.



Horse Bit (Asymmetrical Xian 鑿)

Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE) or earlier

Reportedly discovered in “Hsü-chou Fu”

XLIX:I:B.a.02.

Similar in construction to bit on page 43, this horse bit has two sections. Each section is composed of a central bar with a smaller ring on one side and a larger ring on the other. The two small rings connect the two sections together. There are linear designs starting from the bar, wrapping around the larger ring. The difference with this bit and the previous bit is that this example has one bar that is longer than the other, making it asymmetrical.



Bell (Ling 鈴)

Qin – Western Han dynasty (221 BCE–9 CE)
Reportedly discovered in Gushi (固始) County, Henan province
XLIX:I:C.1.02.

The crown of this bell widens to the lip. When viewed from below, the mouth is lozenge-shaped, ending in corners at the two ends. When examining it from the front or back, the mouth is arched. There is a loop on top of the bell from which it was attached. There is a linear circular decoration on the two faces, which many represent an abstract monster mask (*taotie*). The bell probably would have originally had a clapper inside that would strike the bell when moved.

The period to which this bell dates marks the end of chariot use in China. However, it is still possible that this small bell was used on such a vehicle. Otherwise, it would have been appropriate for use on a horse, or perhaps even a dog.



Set of Four Ferrules

Eastern Zhou dynasty, Warring States period (475–221 BCE)

Reportedly discovered in Shouzhou (centered in present-day Shou County,

Anhui province)

XLIX:I:A.n.c.01.

Each of these hollow ferrules gently curves into animal heads with open mouths. The top of the ferrule starts with a register of a twisted rope-like pattern, followed by S-shaped spirals and triangular peaks and a final register of the twisted rope-like pattern. These types of ferrules are a known type of shape, but their exact function is still unknown. It is possible they were part of the canopy of chariots.



Chariot trapping

Eastern Zhou dynasty, Warring States period (475–221 BCE)
Reportedly discovered in Shouzhou (centered in present-day Shou County,
Anhui province)
XLIX:I:B.b.08.

The rectangular frame of this trapping has two birds' heads on either of the two longer sides. One head may represent a duck with a protrusion from its beak, which appears to be damaged. The other head appears to be a bird of prey with a hollow, trumpet-like protrusion that curves upwards. There appears to be triangular decoration on this hollow section, but it is too corroded to see clearly. There is a chain, possibly originally swiveled, attached to the head of the bird of prey.

Other similar-shaped trappings with birds' heads are known but usually without the trumpet-like protrusion and chain. The function of these objects are not known, but they are probably associated with chariots.



Chariot Draught Pole Finial

Eastern Zhou dynasty, Warring States period (475–221 BCE)

Reportedly discovered in Shouzhou (centered in present-day Shou County,

Anhui province)

XLIX:I:B.f.b.03.

The decoration of this draught pole finial is composed of small, abstract, coiled dragons that together give an overall impression of one large animal head. There is a loop at the bottom front of the finial, from which a ring is attached. The ring is decorated with s-shaped spirals.

Other than protecting the end of the draught pole on a chariot, the function of this finial is mainly decorative. It may have also added an element of intimidation for the viewer of the chariot and prestige for the owner.



Spearhead-shaped Finial of a Chariot's Horizontal Drawbar (Hengshi 衡飾)

Western Zhou dynasty (1045–771 BCE)

Reportedly discovered in Sianfu, (present-day Xi'an 西安) Shaanxi province

XLIX:I:A.i.10.

The tip of this spearhead-shaped finial has a broader angle that turns down more steeply and gently flares into two barbs on either side of the base. The finial is decorated with perforated comma-like openings on either side of the central ridge. There is a socket at the base that connected the finial to the drawbar.

This spearhead-shaped finial would originally have been a pair that attached to either end of a horizontal drawbar of a chariot. The drawbar attached horizontally to the central draught pole. The horse harnesses would have been attached to either side of the drawbar. The openwork decoration of the spearhead-shaped finials weakens the structural integrity of the object, making it impractical for active warfare. They were probably more for presenting an intimidating appearance, rather than to be used as a practical weapon.



Horse Trapping

Eastern Zhou dynasty, Warring States period (475–221 BCE)
Reportedly discovered in Shouzhou (centered in present-day Shou County,
Anhui province)
XLIX:I:B.b.01.

The openwork section of this horse trapping is composed of two tubular sections and decorated with what appears to be intertwining serpents. There is a loop on the bottom from which two integral rings are attached. This object was probably used to help organize the reins on a horse or chariot.



Horse Trapping

Reportedly discovered in Shouzhou (centered in present-day Shou County, Anhui province)

XLIX:I:B.b.02.

This horse trapping is similar. It also has an openwork section composed of two tubular sections that is decorated with intertwining serpents. The loop on the bottom is attached to an integral ring. This horse trapping has additional decoration on either side of the ring. This decoration is corroded and difficult to see. However, they are likely meant to be coiled serpents or dragons. This horse trapping was probably used to help organize the reins on a horse or chariot.

Notes:

1 The Central Plain of China is where Han Chinese, the majority ethnic group of China, have historically traced the origin of their civilization. The present-day city of Luoyang in Henan province was seen as the symbolic centre of the world.

2 Wan 2013, pp. 18-19.

3 Ibid, p. 24.

4 Shaughnessy 1988, p.100, p. 232. For nomadic peoples, horses were a part of everyday life, which was in contrast to the settled people of the Central Plain, where horses were symbols of power and prestige during the early Bronze Age. The development of cavalry in the Central Plain was due to confrontations with semi-nomadic peoples of eastern Central Asia, who carried out warfare on horseback. In order to battle equestrian warriors, the armies of the Eastern Zhou had to adapt cavalry into their armies.

5 Shaughnessy 1988, p. 192.

6 Ibid, p. 190.

7 Ibid, p. 207.

8 Ibid, p. 194.

9 Ibid, p. 198.

10 Wan 2013, p. 35.

11 Shaughnessy 1988, 191 and Wan 2013, p. 101.

12 Wan 2013, p.35, p.50.

13 Ibid, p. 35.

14 Shaughnessy 1988, p. 226.

15 Ibid, p. 226.

16 Wan 2013, pp. 66-67.

17 Shaughnessy 1988, p. 222.

18 Wan 2013, p. 31.

19 Ibid, p. 66.

20 Ebrey 2006, p. 25.

21 Ibid, p. 30.

22 Ibid, p.58.

Weaponry

Michel Lee

BRONZE REVOLUTIONIZED WARFARE in Bronze Age cultures throughout the world. Stone weapons are not as durable as bronze weapons, and bronze blades could be sharpened repeatedly. Bronze could also be re-smelted into new weapons or other objects once they were worn or broken beyond use. As warfare increased during the Zhou dynasty (1046–256 BCE), mainly due to its crumbling governing structure, there became a proliferation in bronze weaponry.

Chinese Swords

CHINESE SWORDS CAN be classified into two categories. *Jian* (劍) are double edged swords, and *dao* (刀) are single-edged knives or swords. The double-edged swords started to appear during the Western Zhou dynasty (1045–771 BCE) and were developed from either Central Asian or indigenous daggers.¹ The single-edged swords developed from late Neolithic and early Bronze Age knives and became longer and used for military purposes in the cavalry during the Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE). The sword and shield became the preferred method of combat over weapons such as bows, spears and dagger-axes by 500 BCE.²

There is much technology related to manufacturing Chinese swords starting in the Bronze Age. The core of the sword was made with a higher copper content, making the material softer and decreasing the chance of shattering when the weapon strikes its intended target. The edge of the sword has a higher tin content, making it harder and allowing a sharper cutting edge. Swords from the state of Qin, which eventually unified China in 221 BCE, could be coated with chromium alloy to increase their sharpness³ and withstand corrosion. Their swords could measure over one meter long. However, longer swords were not necessarily more practical. The future First Emperor of China had trouble drawing his sword from its scabbard during an assassination attempt in 227 BCE, because it was too long.⁴

Within the assemblage of weapons used throughout Chinese history, double-edged swords carry particular cultural significance. Their significance is not unlike famous mythological swords in other parts of the world, such as Excalibur, the legendary sword of King Arthur. Perhaps because swords are weapons used as a last resort during battles, in close, hand-to-hand combat, they become personal weapons and can have individual reputations and names. Many swords carry inscriptions that indicate the owner of the sword or the person who made or commissioned the weapon.

The states of Wu and Yue were at the periphery of the Chinese world during the Zhou dynasty (1046–256 BCE). Wu was located in present-day southern Jiangsu province,

and Yue was located in today's northern Zhejiang province. They were known by their contemporaries for the high-quality blades they produced and their high value. It was during the Eastern Han dynasty (25–220 CE) that the local sword legends of Wu and Yue were first compiled in texts such as the *Yuejue Shu* (越絕書 Historical Texts from the Kingdom of Yue) and *Wu Yue Chunqiu* (吳越春秋 The Spring and Autumn Annals of the Kingdoms of Wu and Yue).⁵

One legend recorded in the *Lüshi Chunqiu* (呂氏春秋 Spring and Autumn Annals of Master Lü) tells of a fine southern sword that was obtained by a man named Ci Fei. Dragons threatened the boat he was on while crossing a river, apparently attracted by the sword. Rather than giving up the sword to the dragons, Ci Fei risked his own life and killed the dragons with the sword.⁶ Not only was the sword worth risking one's life for, it also had the ability to slay dragons. Supernatural qualities are also associated with prized swords in these legends. According to the *Wu Yue Chunqiu*, a prized sword named Zhanlu (湛卢) belonged to the king of Wu (吳國) state. The sword felt that the king lacked principle and therefore departed by water one night and went to King Zhao of Chu state (楚昭王). When the king of Wu realized that the sword was in the possession of the king of Chu, he attacked Chu state.⁷

Another legend recorded in the *Yuejue Shu* tells of a remarkable sword named Chunjun Purity (纯钩 Chunjun) owned by King Goujian (r. 496–465 BCE) of the state of Yue. The pattern on its blade “shown like a row of stars in a constellation.” Its reflection was “as pure as the waters flowing over a dam,” and the cutting edge “was as sharp as a razor.” It was said to have been made by supernatural beings and deities. It was valued at “two market-towns, one thousand blood horses, and two cities of a thousand households.” However, the king’s steward declared that it was no use talking about the value, as the sword could never be replaced.⁸ Both of the swords Zhanlu and Purity were supposedly made by the legendary sword-maker Ou Yezi (歐冶子).

In 1965, a sword dating to the Spring and Autumn period (771–476 BCE) of the Eastern Zhou dynasty (770–256 BCE) was discovered inside a tomb in Hubei province, in an area that used to be part of the state of Chu. The sword was in immaculate condition and resisted corrosion and stayed sharp for the past two and a half millennia. The blade was decorated with repeating rhombus patterns. The sword guard was inlaid with semi-precious stones and the handle was wrapped with silk. An eight-character inscription was inlaid on the blade in gold. Six of the eight characters could be read as “King of Yue” and “sword made for personal use.” The remaining two characters were later determined to be “Goujian.” The entire inscription is now thought to read, “The King of Yue, Goujian, made this sword for his personal use (越王勾踐自作用劍).” Whether or not this is the mythical sword named Purity of Goujian, the King of Yue, it seems that this sword was held in very high regard by someone, likely of very high rank, from the state of Chu. Judging by the workmanship and near pristine condition of the sword, it was a high-quality weapon that would have been treasured by its owner.

The double-edged sword, out of other types of Chinese weapons, were the most culturally significant. Legends of swords start to appear during the late Chinese Bronze Age, particularly relating to the states of Wu and Yue. Swords produced in these two states were highly regarded for their high quality and value. They were treasured even by other states during the Eastern Zhou period (770–475 BCE). Famous swords were named and could be worth life and limb for. Some were associated with supernatural powers and had their own will. These early sword legends continue to inspire and entertain people, as they were the beginning of the of a fantasy martial arts genre that continues in China and beyond today.⁹



Arrow whistle (哨箭頭 shaojian tou)

Purchased in Bengbu (蚌埠), Anhui province

Date uncertain

XLIX:I:A.h.49.

This non-lethal arrowhead has three keels between each of its three flat surfaces that end in a blunt, rounded point. There is a hole on each of its three flat surfaces. Wind would pass through these holes, producing a high-pitched sound, when flying through the air. They were used by commanders for signaling purposes in order to communicate with troops on the battlefield. It is difficult to date this arrow whistle. Such objects have been used in China since at least the Han dynasty, and probably much earlier, and their design has changed very little.



Arrow Tip for a crossbow bolt (镞 zu)

Eastern Zhou – Western Han dynasty, 770 BCE–9 CE

Reportedly discovered in Gushi (固始) County, Henan province

XLIX:I:A.h.05.

The central length of this arrow tip is the thickest part of the object in order to reinforce its sturdiness. The blade forks from either side of the body at the middle, creating two barbs. A tang, which probably would originally have been longer, extends from the base of the tip. It would have slotted into a wood or bamboo shaft. The arrow tip may have been tinned, which helps to keep the blade sharp and prevent the bronze from corroding. The barbed shape of this arrow tip can fit snuggly into the grooves on top of crossbow trigger mechanism such as on page 58.



Crossbow Trigger Mechanism (弩机 nuji) with Dragon-headed Trigger

Western Han dynasty (206 BCE–9 CE)

Reportedly discovered in “Yen-ku Chi,” close to Shouzhou, Anhui province

XLIX:I:A.a.02.

Intended to be mounted on a wooden stock, this crossbow trigger mechanism is composed of various pieces. The trigger on this mechanism is in the form of a dragon's head, which is not common for crossbow trigger mechanisms. The top surface is decorated with four parallel inlaid silver wires running the length of the trigger mechanism. This is surrounded by a thin interconnected triangular border.

The crossbow was invented in China by the Warring States period (475 BCE–221 BCE). The highly developed bronze casting technology required for the precision of fitting the different pieces together was an advantage the Central Plains culture had over their neighbors. The first recorded use of the weapon was at the battle of Ma Ling in 342 BCE. 10,000 infantry with crossbows were deployed by Sun Pin (孫臏) of Qi (齊) State in aid of Han (韓) State. The forces of Pang Juan (龐涓) of Wei (魏) State were driven away, and their general committed suicide.

Crossbows were a weapon used by infantry and cavalry. By the Han Dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE), crossbows came in various sizes. Some could probably have been used by one hand, while others were stationary and had a pull of over 159 kg (350lbs) to cock them. This weapon, which could pierce armour, was often credited for the superiority of the Han dynasty's army. They proved particularly effective against cavalry attacks when a volley of bolts were shot en masse.



Spearhead (矛頭 maotou)

Reportedly discovered in “Ho-chiu Hsien,” east of Shou County, Anhui province
Eastern Zhou dynasty, Warring States period, early 5th–4th century BCE
XLIX:I:A.i.04.

The shape of this spearhead has a gentle waist in the midsection. The blade has a slightly concave surface with a raised central ridge. There is a “taotie” mask at the centre, bottom two thirds of the socket with an integral ring decorated with a rope pattern coming from its mouth. The ring may have been used to attach a horsehair tassel used to distract the opponent from the spearhead. There is a shallow groove below the ring with a thin line in the middle. On either side of the shallow groove is a design in mirror image of each other, cast in intaglio. These may be may represent abstract birds of prey and may have originally been inlaid with turquoise. The bird decoration may be an indication of clan or ownership.



Spearhead (矛頭 *maotou*)

Eastern Zhou dynasty (770–221 BCE)

Reportedly discovered in Shouzhou (centered in present-day Shou County,

Anhui province)

XLIX:I:A.i.09.

Missing the tip, this spearhead has a prominent central ridge that helps to reinforce the durability of the blade. The base of the blade is decorated with abstract coiled dragons. There are two holes in the socket that allows for a pin to be driven through the pole on which it was mounted, in order to stabilize the spearhead on the pole.



Guarded Lance (鎗 sha)

Reportedly discovered in Sianfu, (present-day Xi'an 西安), Shaanxi province
Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE)

XLIX:A.g.03.

With a narrow blade slotted through a slight “w”-shaped guard, this type of weapon would have been attached to a long pole. The blade and guard were case separately. Its blade was affective for both puncturing with the tip and cutting with the edge. There is a loop in the middle of one side of the guard. A tassel made from horsehair may have been attached from the loop, which could act as a distraction from the blade itself for the opponent.



Guard from a Guarded Lance (鎗 sha)

Reportedly discovered in Sianfu(present-day Xi'an 西安), Shaanxi province
Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE)
XLIX:A.g.01.

This “w”-shaped guard is a larger version of the guard compared to the previous example. The blade that would have once slotted through the guard would have been rather long, making this weapon essentially a sword on a pole. The loop attached to the middle of one side of the guard may have been used to secure a horsetail tassel with which to distract the opponent from the blade itself.



Swords and daggers

Sword (劍 jian) with Decorated Guard

Eastern Zhou dynasty (770–221 BCE)

Reportedly discovered in Shouzhou (centered in present-day Shou County, Anhui province)

XLIX:I:A.1.05.

This sword is one of the most decorated within the collection of the Hallwyl Museum. The blade of this sword is plain. The guard has raised spiral motifs that would have been inlaid with semi-precious stones, such as turquoise and crystals. The two ridges encircling the handle, which is common for this type of sword, is grooved. It would have been bound by textile for better grip. The pommel is decorated with finely cast linear geometric designs in four registers. The registers are bordered by lines that increase by one with each register as they move towards the centre of the pommel. The outer register contains groups of parallel lines arranged perpendicular to each other, forming chevron-like designs. The next two registers are adorned with cross-hatched lines. The inner-most register is composed of six triangles, each composed of one triangle inside another, pointing toward the centre of the pommel. The sword was reportedly discovered in the vicinity of present-day Shou County in Anhui province. Depending on the exact time and location in which it was buried, the owner of the sword could have been from either Chu State or Wu State during the Eastern Zhou dynasty.



Sword (劍 jian) with Cast Inscription

Eastern Zhou dynasty, Spring and Autumn period (771–476 BCE)

Reportedly from Xuzhou (徐州), Jiangsu province.

XLIX:A.1.17.

The inscription on the blade of this sword reads, “Ruohoujie zhi zao,” meaning “Made by Duke Jie of Ruo.” The handle is conical in shape and ends with a round pommel. The handle was probably bound in textile for better grip.

Ruo was a small vassal state that was annexed by Chu State sometime after 622 BCE, which helps to date this sword. The fact that Ruo state was annexed by Chu State might help to explain why this sword was (reportedly) discovered in present-day Xuzhou, Jiangsu province, which was once part of Chu territory.



Sword (劍 jian) with Engraved Inscription

Eastern Zhou dynasty, Warring States period (475–221 BCE)

Reportedly from Xuzhou (徐州), Jiangsu province.

XLIX:I:A.1.19.

The blade of this sword is unadorned except for an engraved inscription that reads, “Youwu zhi jian,” or “the Sword of Youwu.” There are two ridges that encircle the handle of the weapon, which would have been bound with textile for better grip. The handle ends in a round pommel. Although much more elaborately decorated swords exist, the original owner of this weapon was probably a relatively high-ranking warrior. If the reported discovery location as conveyed by Karlbeck is correct, the burial location of this sword would have been in the state of Chu of the Warring states period.



Dagger (匕首 bishou)

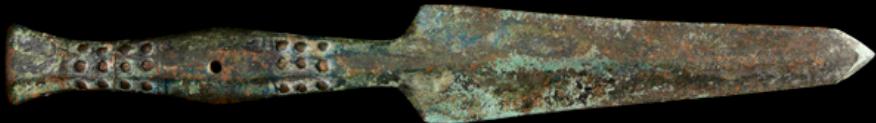
Reportedly discovered in Shouzhou (centered in

present-day Shou County, Anhui province)

Eastern Zhou dynasty (770–221 BCE)

XLIX:I:A.c.01.

The handle of this dagger has two protruding ridges that wrap around its circumference. A circular pommel is at the base of the handle. The handle may originally have been wrapped in textile for better grip. The v-shaped guard is the same design as is found on some swords. The main difference between this dagger and the design of some swords is that the dagger has a shorter blade, which is shorter than the handle in this example. It is possible that this dagger started out as a sword and the blade was shortened either through damage or repeated sharpening.



Dagger (匕首 *bishou*)

Reportedly discovered in Sianfu (present-day Xi'an 西安), Shaanxi province

Possibly Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE)

XLIX:I:A.c.06.

The design of this dagger is unusual. The blade and handle are cast in one piece. The tip gently angles at the top, giving the majority of the blade a different cutting angle from the tip. The central spine of the blade merges into the handle. There are raised studs dotting the top and bottom of the handle, with the middle section slightly bulging. This is to facilitate better grip. The handle flares gently into the pommel. There is a small hole in the middle of the handle, which may have been strung with a cord for attachment to a belt or perhaps a sheath.



Miniature Sword Fitting

Reportedly from the Huai River Valley (southern Henan, northern Anhui and northern Jiangsu provinces)

Eastern Zhou dynasty, 6th–5th century BC

XLIX:I:C.ö.c.02.

In the basic shape of an isosceles trapezoid, this object is hollow in the middle and decorated in openwork with designs of abstract dragons. It is probably the pommel, or perhaps guard, of a miniature sword. The complicated design may have been cast with the lost-wax technique. The inside of the fitting is filled with a brownish putty-like material that may have been used to stabilize the fragile object after it was unearthed from the burial. Miniature objects were sometimes used for mortuary purposes, where they were believed to take on the same essence as a full-sized object.

Compare this fitting with a sword handle cast in gold in the collection of the British Museum:

https://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=258872&partId=1&images=true_details.aspx?objectId=258872&partId=1&images=true



Dagger-axe (戈 ge)

Eastern Zhou dynasty (770–256 BCE)

Reportedly from Shandong province

XLIX:I:A.d.a.01.

The cutting edge of this weapon is similar to a dagger and continues along the curve, ending at the bottom of the blade. The flange that juts out from the base of the blade is a tang that would have slotted through a long, wooden pole onto which it was attached. The three slits near the blade and one slit in the tang were used to secure the blade onto the pole with some type of lashing. There is a four-character inscription cast onto the ge that reads “ge made by _ Yang” (陽作戈 _ Yang zuo ge).

Ge started to be used during the Shang dynasty and were replaced by another type of dagger-axe, called *ji* (戟), during the Han dynasty. They were used by both infantry, as well as charioteers. Wielding *ge* required a large space for which to swing the long pole on which the blade was attached.



Dagger-axe (戈 ge)

Eastern Zhou – Qin dynasty, 5th–3rd century BCE

Reportedly discovered in Shouzhou (centered in present-day Shou County, Anhui province)

XLIX:I:A.d.a.05.

The main blade of this ge is almost leaf-shaped, allowing it to better catch the target. It was more ideally designed for tactics relating to cavalry, such as hooking the legs of horses or pulling riders off their animals. The tang itself is also a blade, increasing its effectiveness.



Fragment of Dagger-axe (戈 ge)

Eastern Zhou dynasty (770–256 BCE)

Reportedly discovered in Shouzhou (centered in present-day Shou County,

Anhui province)

XLIX:A.d.a.07.

This fragment is the tang of a dagger-axe. The tang is part that would have slotted through the opening of the pole on which the dagger-axe was attached to. The openwork scroll design is probably meant to depict abstract dragons. Next to the openwork are similar designs in intaglio. These depressions would have been inlaid with turquoise (see link below). Such a spectacular weapon may have been mainly ceremonial in nature and would have been owned by someone of high rank.

The complicated openwork decoration on this fragment was probably made with the lost-wax technique, in which a wax model was first made and then encased in clay. Molten bronze was poured into a hole in the clay mould, melting the wax and replacing it with bronze. It is easier to make complicated forms using the lost-wax technique. The lost-wax technique began to be used during the Eastern Zhou period.

<http://collections.smvk.se/carlotta-om/web/object/110414>

Example of a complete dagger-axe with openwork tang and inlaid turquoise.

Eastern Zhou dynasty (770–256 BCE)

Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, National Museums of World Culture, Sweden

OM-1974-0371



Socketed dagger-axe (戈 ge)

Shang dynasty, 12th century BCE
Reportedly from Shandong province
XLIX:I:A.d.b.05.

Of a simple dagger shape, this *ge* has a ridge running across the length of the middle of the blade and socket, with two additional ridges on the top and bottom of the socket, that reinforces the strength of the weapon. Bronze *ge* were originally developed from stone prototypes (see link below), and this blade is an early design. Rather than using slits with which to lash the blade onto a pole, as with the later designs, this *ge* uses a socket through which a pole was inserted. There is an inscription chiseled into the blade. It was probably added after it was unearthed in attempt to increase its value.

<http://collections.smvk.se/carlotta-om/web/object/101576>

Jade *ge*
Shang dynasty, 12th–11th century BCE
Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities, National Museums of World Culture
OM-1989-0008



Dagger-axe

Possibly Han dynasty (202 BCE–220 CE)
XLIX:A.d.b.07.

There are two sides of this dagger-axe: a longer end that is dagger-like and another that is shorter and axe-like. There is a socket opening in between the two ends in which a wooden handle would have been inserted. Two small holes on either side of the socket would have allowed a pin to be driven through the handle, securing the dagger-axe. The small size of this object suggests the handle would have been relative short and may have been a personal weapon, as well as a tool.



Ceremonial Axe (鉞 Yue)

Western Zhou dynasty, 11th–10th century BCE

Purchased in Beijing

XLIX:I:A.m.01.

The most prominent feature of this axe head is the large hole surrounded by a raised collar in the center. The cutting edge flares away from the body. There are two small rectangular openings near the base, and a tang with a small hole that would have been inserted into a wood handle. The small round and rectangular openings would have been used to secure the axe head onto the handle, perhaps with leather straps and other materials.

This type of axe was ceremonial in nature. The large hole in the middle would be a point of weakness if it were to have been used in combat. Similar axes made from jade (see link below) were used in China since at least the Shang dynasty (c. 1600–c. 1046 BCE). The jade axes appear to have been reworked from jade *bi* and collared disks, which themselves would have been ceremonial in nature, although we do not know their exact meaning. The collar sometimes found around the hole on these jade versions seem to have been transferred to the later bronze versions. Both the jade and bronze axes may have changed connotations over time but was probably a symbol of power and authority.

<https://archive.asia.si.edu/publications/jades/object.php?q=11406>

Jade *yue* axe, probably reworked from a collared disk.

Anyang period, Late Shang dynasty, ca. 1300–1050 BCE

Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution

F1970.39

Notes:

- 1 Peers 2006, p. 24.
- 2 Peers 2006, p. 31.
- 3 Peers 2006, p. 39.
- 4 Ibid, p. 44.
- 5 Milburn 2008, pp. 423-424.
- 6 Ibid, p. 425.
- 7 Ibid, p. 435.
- 8 Ibid, pp. 426-427.
- 9 The film *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* popularized the historical Chinese wuxia martial arts fantasy genre of literature and film to the world in 2000. However, this genre has its origins in the Bronze Age sword legends of China.

Tools

Michel Lee

LIKE OTHER BRONZE Age civilizations in the world, China also used bronze for making tools. Like for weapons, bronze was a sturdy material that can withstand shock better than stone, bone or wood. Cutting edges could be repeatedly sharpened until the material itself wears away. Once they have been either used or broken beyond repair, the material could be re-smelted and made into something new. Indeed, bronze tools are probably under-represented in the archaeological record, as the material was usually recycled.



Ceremonial Knife (?)

Possibly Eastern Zhou dynasty (770–256 BCE)
XLIX:I:A.e.01.

The tip of this knife was sharpened on both the top and bottom edges. The bottom cutting edge continues to the handle. The top edge expands into a cup-shaped opening on one side and a slightly convex surface to accommodate the opening on the other side of the blade. The top edge, from the “cup” to the tang is blunt. The handle may have originally been wrapped with textile to reinforce the grip.

This knife appears to be unique. Without archaeological context or decoration, it is difficult to date this object with certainty. The fact that this is a rare type of object suggests it could have been made during the Eastern Zhou dynasty. At this time, the feudal system of China was breaking down and regional rulers became more powerful. Bronze became more accessible to the elite, and the types of objects made from bronze proliferated.

It is possible that this knife served ceremonial purposes. The function of the cup within the blade is unknown. It appears that the blade was meant to pierce and then cut, due to the point and two sharpened edges at the tip and a cutting edge at the bottom of the blade.



Knife (刀) dao with ring handle

Late Eastern Zhou dynasty – Western Han dynasty, 3rd–2nd century BCE

Reportedly discovered from Gushi County (固始), Henan province

XLIX:I:A.f.01.

Dao are blades with one cutting edge and can include both knives and swords. This knife has a straight back and a cutting edge that tapers slightly to a rounded tip. There is a ring at the back of the handle. This ring was used to hang the knife from a belt, which kept it close to the body, demonstrating its usefulness.



Knife (刀 dao)

Late Eastern Zhou dynasty – Western Han dynasty, 3rd–2nd century BCE
Reportedly discovered from Gushi County (固始), Henan province
XLIX:I:A.f.02.

This knife is very similar. Long swords were also made with the same design. These knives were multi-purpose tools. Texts during this time were written with ink onto bamboo strips. Knives could be used to correct a mistake on the bamboo strip by shaving away the top layer.



Adze Head (鉤頭 bentou)

Zhou dynasty (1046–256 BCE)

Reportedly discovered in Sianfu(present-day Xi'an 西安), Shaanxi province

XLIX:I:A.b.11.

This adze head tapers towards the cutting edge at the front. The top, decorated with cast lines that looks almost like a bird track, is narrower than the bottom. The adze head has a socket at the back in which a handle would be inserted. The adze would have been held and used in a hammer-like fashion. Its purpose was for woodwork, taking away pieces of wood with every strike.



Chisel Head (鑿頭 *zao tou*)

Possibly Shang dynasty (16th century BCE–c. 1046 BCE)

XLIX:I:A.k.01.

The front of this chisel head is relatively narrow and widens gently towards the socket at the back. The two edges on the top are beveled. The tool probably had a straight wooden handle that slotted into the socket. Like a modern chisel, it was probably used either by pushing from or hammering the handle to cut away pieces of wood at the cutting edge. Rather than used for shaping the general form of a piece of wood, like with an adze, the chisel was used for more decorative or detailed work.



Fish Hooks (魚鉤) yugou

Possibly Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE) or earlier

Reportedly discovered in Shouzhou (centered in present-day Shou County, Anhui province)

XLIX:C.p.01.

These two fishhooks are nearly identical in design to modern fishhooks, including a barb at the tip to prevent the fish from struggling free. The main difference is that rather than having an eye at the end of the shank with which to string a line through, these hooks have a notch at the end with which to secure the line. The shank is flattened towards the end. Due to the purely functional design, without any decoration, the dating is difficult to pinpoint.

Similar ancient but modern-appearing fishhooks have been discovered in other parts of the world. For instance, a fishhook with an eye at the end of the shank from Thailand is in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (accession number: 2001.433.158) and is dated to 500 BCE–300 CE.¹ Ancient fishhooks with notches at the end of the shank have also been discovered in Israel.²

Notes:

1 <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/56472> [accessed 14 October 2019].

2 Galili, Ehud, Avshalom Semer and Baruch Rosen 2013, p.150.

Personal Adornments

Michel Lee

THE EARLIEST MATERIAL in this section dates to the Eastern Zhou dynasty (770–256 BCE), rather late in the Chinese Bronze Age. At the beginning of the Chinese Bronze Age, ceremonial vessels and weapons were the most significant objects that were made from bronze. Jade and other semi-precious stones would have been the preferred material from which personal adornments were made. During the Eastern Zhou dynasty, the feudal system started to break down, and regional rulers usurped power for themselves. Bronze became more accessible to the elite, and personal adornments made from the material proliferated.

Chinese armies adopted cavalry during the Warring States period (475–221 BCE). In order to combat horse-riding nomads from the north, the Chinese states needed to confront the horse-riding peoples on their own terms – on horseback. In order to be more efficient on horses, nomadic garments, including garment hooks, were also adopted. According to the *Shiji* (史記) Records of the Grand Historian), completed around 94 BCE, King Wuling of Zhao state (趙武靈王) defended his decision to adopt cavalry, mounted archers and the clothing that was used by the nomads in 307 BCE. Nomadic peoples were considered “barbarian” by the Central States, and adopting aspects of their lifestyle was considered a betrayal to the culture of the Central States.¹ In the end, the king prevailed.

The use of bronze garment hooks in China was one of the results of the nomadic influence that was adopted by the Central States, although originally grudgingly, during the late Bronze Age of China. It coincided with a time when power was no longer centralized, and the Zhou royal family were only the nominal rulers to many, often powerful, competing states. Bronze, which was once a material controlled by the royalty to legitimize their rule and help them in warfare, became a status material available to a wider range of elite. Bronze personal adornments was one of the main ways of showing one’s status.



Garment Hook (帶鉤 daigou) in the Form of an Elephant Head

Eastern Zhou dynasty, Warring States period, 4th-3rd century BCE
Reportedly discovered in Gushi (固始) County, Henan province
XLIX:I:D.03.

This garment hook is in the form of an elephant's head. The hook section of this object is modeled after an elephant's trunk. There is a button on the back of the hook that would have attached to a leather belt. Small hooks, such as this, could have been used for attaching sword scabbards to the belt.

Elephants once lived in Central China during the Bronze Age. They lived as far north as Anyang in Henan province. The earliest written account of elephants in China occur in the *Shijing* (詩經 Classic of Poetry), which contains poetry from the 11th-7th centuries BCE. Elephants were occasionally used in warfare in China up until 971. Today, wild elephants can only be found in the tropical regions of Xishuangbana in Yunnan province, southwest China.



Garment Hook (帶鉤 daigou) Inlaid with Malachite

Eastern Zhou dynasty, Warring States period (475–221 BCE)

Reportedly from Henan province

XLIX:I:D.51.

Of a typical form, the body of this garment hook is rounded at the bottom and gradually gets narrower towards the hook, which is in the shape of a down-turned animal head. When examined from the profile, the body of the garment hook undulates upwards to accommodate the button on the back, before flowing back down again. The majority of the body is decorated with inlaid malachite arranged in geometric forms.



Garment (帶鈎 daigou) in the Form of a Camel

Eastern Zhou dynasty, Warring States period (475–221 BCE)
Reportedly discovered in Gushi (固始) County, Henan province
XLIX:I:D.30.

In the form of a recumbent camel with its neck thrust out and head tucked in, this hook is depicting the animal in a relatively realistic manner. The dense spiral decoration near the front legs of the animal helps date it to the Warring States period. The button underneath the camel would have attached to a leather belt, and the neck of the camel would have secured the other end of the belt, or perhaps sword scabbard. Camels would have been valued as hardy pack animals, carrying supplies or other goods on long-distance journeys.



Garment Hook (帶鈎 daigou) with Feline Heads

Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE)

XLIX:I:D.36.

The basic design of this garment hook is a bar with three concave furrows running along its length. It ends with an animal head, possibly a feline, on either end. Originally, one end would have had the hook protruding from the animal's mouth, but this is now missing. A button is located on the back of the buckle, off-centered, from which it was attached to a belt. The garment hook is gilt, much of which has worn off.

A similar and complete example is in the collection of the Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. (F1916.206).

<https://asia.si.edu/object/F1916.209/>



Garment hook (带钩 daigou) in the form of a Anthropomorphic Beast

Western Han dynasty (206 BCE–9 CE)

Reportedly from Gushi (固始) County, Henan province

XLIX:I:D.10.

The body of this garment hook is in the form of a bear-like anthropomorphic beast. It holds a sword in its right hand and a shield in its left hand. The lower limbs also appear to be holding weapons, but it is too corroded to see clearly. A bar extends above the beast's head, and the hook is in the shape of a down-turned animal head. The button that would have attached the garment hook to the belt is located on the back of the beast's chest.



Hairpin (發簪 *fazan*)

Possibly Song dynasty (960–1279)

Reportedly discovered in Shouzhou (centered in present-day
Shou County, Anhui province)

XLIX:I:C.r.01.

Of an elongated U-shape, the simple design of this undecorated hairpin makes it difficult to date. However, this style was more popular during the Song dynasty.



Garment Hook (帶鉤 daigou) inlaid with Silver and Gold

Eastern Zhou dynasty, Warring States period (475–221 BCE)

Reportedly from Henan province

XLIX:D.58.

The body of this garment hook has a spade-like form, with a rounded bottom. The neck undulates slightly and tapers to a down-turned, horse-like head, which forms the hook. It is inlaid with silver wire in spiral forms with inlaid gold highlights. The button that secures it to the belt is located behind the spade-like body.

Notes:

1 Di Cosmo 2002, pp. 134-139.

Chinese Mirrors

Michel Lee

THE EARLIEST KNOWN mirrors in China date to the late Neolithic Period, from the Qiajia culture (c. 2200–c. 1600 BCE) in Gansu province, northwestern China. This is an area that lies outside of the Central Plain region where the dynastic system of the Central States developed from during the Bronze Age. Similar mirrors have been discovered at Shang dynasty (16th century–c. 1046 BCE) sites in Central China. The earliest Chinese mirror in the collection of the Hallwyl Museum dates to the late Bronze Age, during the Eastern Zhou dynasty (770–256 BCE) and Warring States period (475 BCE–221 BCE). This is when there starts to be more of an industry in producing mirrors in Central China. The latest mirrors in the Hallwyl collection date to the Song dynasty (960–1279).¹ The decoration on traditional mirrors are almost always on the back of the reflective surfaces. A loop on the back of the mirrors allow for a cord to be strung through it from which the mirror could be held. Mirror stands also existed so that the mirror remains suspended while leaving the hands free.

Like in many parts of the ancient world, mirrors in China originally had a spiritual function. The earliest mirrors were too small to be used effectively for viewing oneself. They most likely had a spiritual function, although we have no written records from the Neolithic or early Bronze Age about beliefs surrounding mirrors. Some may also have been used for signaling purposes, reflecting sunlight to communicate with another person from a distance. The early Qijia and Shang dynasty mirrors have simple sun ray-like decorations and were probably used in ceremonies relating to the sun. The decoration on mirrors from the late Bronze Age usually contain cosmological designs.

During the Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE), immortality cults became popular amongst the elite. Images of immortals, deities and their lands are a prevalent theme expressed on mirrors. The messages depicted in the decorations become more accessible, due to the quantity of written sources regarding spiritual beliefs that have accumulated by this time. There are sometimes inscriptions referring to the sun and moon and decorations that can be interpreted as light rays. The identities of specific deities represented in the mirrors, such as the Queen Mother of the West (西王母) and winged immortals (羽人) can be identified. There may also be inscriptions that wish the owner auspiciousness, such as many descendants and long life.

By the Tang dynasty (618–907), it appears that mirrors meant for cosmetic use became popular amongst the elite. This may be due, in part, to the wealth of the Tang dynasty. International trade along the Silk Roads reached a height during the Tang, and exotic and luxury objects were in demand by the wealthy. Although some mirrors may have been made especially for cosmetic reasons, this did not exclude the spiritual beliefs around reflective surfaces. Even today, there are cultures in Asia that still have spiritual associations with mirrors. Amongst many Chinese, including in diaspora communities, round mirrors are sometimes hung above the main door in order to keep negative forces away.



Mirror with Dragon Motifs (鏡 jīng)

Eastern Zhou dynasty, Warring States period (475–221 BCE)

Reportedly discovered in Jincun, Henan province

XLIX:I:E.01.

Although fragmented, one can still make out the dragon motifs on a dotted background in the central field. Moving outwards from the centre, there is a twisted double-line design, followed by a register filled with cowrie shells. It is possible that cowrie shells had connotations of wealth, as they were used as currency during the Neolithic. In between each register is a plain band. The small loop in the center has a twisted rope-like decoration.

Although mirrors in China started to be made in the late Neolithic period in the north western region of present-day China, this is still considered an earlier mirror for Central China. Later mirrors have a thick ridge around the edge to give it structural support.



Mirror (鏡 jīng) with Mythical Creatures and Deities

Eastern Han dynasty, late 2nd–3rd century
XLIX:I:E.33.

With a thick, round knob in the center, this extremely well-cast mirror contains images of deities and celestial beings², interacting with various types of fantastic creatures, including *bixie* 辟邪 – a chimera-like auspicious creature whose name means “averting evil.” The register outside of this main scene contains half round roof end tile-like designs interspersed between seal-like inscriptions, each with the four characters 天王日月 that translates to “Heaven, king, sun, moon.” This could be referring to complimentary, polarized forces of the ruler in the heavens, the earthly ruler (king), the sun and the moon – the extremes that encompass the cosmos. The narrow register after this contains triangular designs that could be interpreted as light rays. The next register contains extremely finely executed winged immortals flying and interacting with mythical birds, dragons and other beasts. The final register on the edge contains abstract cloud patterns, giving the entire mirror a mythical, heavenly context.



Mirror (鏡 jing) with Well-wishing Inscription

Western Han dynasty (206 BCE–9 CE)

XLIX:I:E.11.

This mirror still retains its silver sheen. It contains the inscription 長貴富, 宜酒食, 樂勿事, 日有熹 that can be translated as: “may you always have status and riches, may you have wine and food, may you be free from misfortune, may you have happiness every day.” Moving outward from the inscription, there are what can be considered wing-like designs in between leaf-like designs. It is possible that the wing-like designs represent winged immortals that are so prominent in Han dynasty mirror decoration and other art forms. The outer register have inverted lobes, giving the appearance of radiating light.



Mirror (鏡 jing) with Liubo Design

Eastern Han dynasty, 1st century
XLIX:I:E.17.

The design of this mirror is based on an ancient board game called liubo 六博. Although the rules and deeper meaning of the game are no longer known, its earliest depictions are associated with immortals. In the West, this design has been called TLV due to the geometric patterns that look similar to those letters.

Within the square in the centre, there are a set of Chinese characters called the “earthly branches 地支,” which can represent times of the day and directions. Outside of the square, within the “TLV” field, there are mythological animals, four of which are directional animals: Green Dragon of the East, Vermilion Bird of the South, White Tiger of the West and Dark Warrior (composed of a snake wrapped around a tortoise) of the North.

An inscription around the mirror outside of the field with mythical animals indicates that this mirror was made by Shangfang 尚方, the office responsible for the imperial workshops. It also wishes the owner numerous sons and grandsons, as well as prosperity. That is followed by a thin band of vertical lines and then a band of triangular patterns that give the impression of light rays. The outermost register contains abstract cloud motifs.



Mirror (鏡 jing) with Cosmological Design

Tang dynasty (618– 907)

XLIX:I:E.35.

The centre of this mirror contains a knob in the form of a turtle with trigrams (bagua 八卦) on its shell. The turtle is located in a square with wave designs within it. At each corner within the square, there are symbols signifying water, metal, fire and wood. Beyond the square is an inscription: “象物激神朗質澄真” that can be translated as: “The mirror reflects the things and renders their souls clear, its substance is pure and true.” The twelve animals of the zodiac are located in the next field. The final field is split into four sections, each contains what is probably a deity or immortal in different settings. One section contains the sun with a crow in it. The opposite quadrant includes the moon with a cinnamon tree in it. The outer rim is lobed.

The trigrams on the shell of the turtle are combinations of three broken and/or unbroken lines. These magical symbols are related to divination and the concept of the opposing forces of yin and yang. According to legend, a turtle once crawled out of the Luo River, revealing the magic trigrams. The register containing zodiac animals can be seen as representing the cycle of time, which according to the traditional Chinese concept, has a cycle of sixty years. The concentric squares that is part of the decoration of this mirror may represent the earth. The circle within the lobed rim may represent Heaven. This mirror can be seen as a cosmological map for both time and space.



Mirror (鏡 jing) with Near Eastern-style Decoration

Tang dynasty (618–907)

XLIX:I:E.34.

The central knob on this mirror is in the form of a bear, or perhaps a lion. There are six more of these beasts surrounding the knob. After this register is a band containing different types of birds, including mandarin ducks, amid vegetal scrolls. The outermost field contains cloud motifs. The mirror still retains much of its silver sheen.

The cosmological motifs of earlier mirrors give way to designs that are more decorative and narrative during the Tang dynasty. The decoration seen on this mirror is based on Near Eastern designs. The Silk Roads were at a golden age during the Tang dynasty. The Tang cooperated with the Sassanid dynasty in Persia to keep both ends of the trade networks relatively safe for travel, which encouraged trade, amongst other things. There were many stylistic exchanges between China and the Near East during this time.



Mirror (鏡 jìng) Depicting Laozi

Song dynasty (960–1279)
XLIX:I:E.38.

In this mirror, there is a man with a water buffalo facing a kneeling man. They are in a rocky and watery landscape with a willow tree in the background. The man with the buffalo probably depicts Laozi, the mythical founder of philosophical Daoism.

This mirror demonstrates the narrative quality of later Chinese mirrors. According to traditional histories, Laozi lived in the 6th century BCE and was supposedly a contemporary of Confucius. He worked as an archivist for the Zhou royal court and built up a following for his teachings. Toward the end of his life, Laozi became disillusioned with the Zhou leadership and decided to go into self-imposed exile and travel west on a water buffalo. When he reached Xianggu Pass, where the gate that leads to lands beyond China was located, a guard named Yinxi recognized the sage. The kneeling person in the mirror probably represents Yinxi. He begged Laozi to write down his teachings before leaving. The result is the text called the Daodejing 道德经, or The Classic of the Virtue of the Way. This is the primary text for the Daoist religion/philosophy.

Notes:

1 The exception to this are found on some mirrors dating to around the Liao dynasty (916–1125), where Buddhist deities are sometime engraved onto the reflective surfaces of mirrors.

2 See Chou 2000, 52-53 for a very similar mirror. The author identifies each individual deity, including the Queen Mother of the West, the King Father of the East and the Yellow Emperor.

Korean Mirrors

Michel Lee

THE STORY OF Korean copper alloy (bronze) mirrors is also a story of technological transmission and cultural influence. Archaeological evidence shows how the Korean Peninsula has been interacting with people in present-day Siberia, Manchuria and China since the Neolithic period, and mirrors demonstrate this cultural interaction. The earliest mirrors discovered on the Korean Peninsula date from the 6th to 4th century BCE. These cast mirrors, with two hanging loops, have parallel linear patterns that form triangles that then become part of a larger star design. This type of mirror comes from the Bronze Age Liaoning Bronze Dagger culture (c. 1000–c. 400 BCE) that existed in what is today's Liaoning province of China and into the Korean Peninsula. The oldest prototype of this type of mirror design, but with only one loop, has been discovered from the Qijia culture (c. 2200–c. 1600 BCE) in the upper region of today's Gansu and eastern Qinghai provinces in China. This culture is the earliest known culture in present-day China that worked with metal and probably also facilitated the introduction of horses and chariots into China. It may have been on horseback that the design and technology of this type of mirror reached the Korean Peninsula. Extremely fine mirrors with similar designs and two hanging loops were made, possibly with the lost wax technique, in Korea starting around the 4th century BCE.

We do not know how these early mirrors were used, but they presumably had a spiritual function, like in so many cultures of the ancient world. Historical and archaeological sources tell us that mirrors were also used for mundane reasons, such as grooming, since at least the Unified Silla period (668–935). However, this was not to the exclusion of their ritual functions. Korean Shamanism, and later Buddhism, used mirrors in their rituals and attribute spiritual properties to them, aspects of which continue to the present day. Drawing from textual and iconographic evidence, mirrors had symbolic associations with truth, auspiciousness and longevity.¹ Within more contemporary contexts, mirrors are still used in “shamanist” ceremonies within Korea, which may allude to ancient sun worship beliefs.² Small mirrors, called myeongdo or donggyeong, are believed to be the face of a god and are still used in worshipped by shamans. They can be hung above a shrine or on the wall by itself. Upon the retirement of a shaman, the mirror is buried in the ground.³ Associations with mirrors draw on many Daoist, Buddhist and popular beliefs from China. When a person dies, it is believed by some that their soul enters the Underworld to be judged for their sins. A Mirror of Judgement is used to reflect the person's sins while they were alive.⁴ Scrolls, derived from Chinese originals, depicting judgement scenes from the Underworld, often depict such a mirror.

The Korean mirrors at the Hallwyl Museum come from a specific time in Korean history. They all date to the Goryeo dynasty (918–1392), which was when these objects reached their height of popularity and became more commonly placed in tombs. A diverse range of mirrors were made in Korea during this time, usually with decoration based on Chinese mirror designs. There were probably some imports of mirrors from China during the Goryeo dynasty, but there was also a mirror production industry within Korea. There exists some mirrors that have the Chinese characters for “Made in Goryeo” cast into the decoration.⁵ It is also possible that some of the Goryeo mirrors were meant for export to China.

Large-scale trade was conducted between China, Korea and Japan during the Goryeo dynasty. One of the most well-known shipwrecks that illustrate the trade was the Sinan Shipwreck, which sailed from present-day Ningbo, China and sunk off the coast of Sinan, South Korea probably between 1308 and 1330, while it was on its way to the Japanese island of Kyushu, probably to Fukuoka. The overwhelming majority of the cargo was ceramics and metal wares, including mirrors, that were made in China. It also included incense and exotic woods and spices that probably came from Southeast Asia and small amounts of Korean objects that were already antique at the time the ship sank, as well as small quantities of Japanese products that could have been the personal effects of crew members.

There may sometimes be questions about where a mirror was made. For instance, a known motif of a ship amid waves has been discovered in tombs in both China and Korea. Mirrors were likely traded between the two countries. Moulds of Chinese originals could also have been made and recast in Korea. This could explain why the decoration on mirrors excavated in Korea are often less crisp than their Chinese counterparts, as copies are usually less defined than the originals. Regardless of their origin of manufacture, the mirrors categorized under Korea in the Hallwyl collection are attributed to the Goryeo dynasty, as they would have been used in Korea during this time.

All the Korean mirrors were purchased by Willhelmina von Hallwyl from Yamanaka & Company, a famous dealer in Oriental art during the first half of the 20th century. He worked with sources in China, Korea (then a Japanese colony) and Japan. Although there is sometimes confusion about whether a mirror is from China or Korea, we may assume that Yamanaka knew which country the objects had been sourced, which adds importance to this collection.



Lobed Mirror with Decoration of a Dragon Carp

Goryeo dynasty (918–1392)
Acquired from Yamanaka, 1930
XLIX:II:A.07.

This eight-lobed mirror is decorated with a carp transforming into a winged dragon amid waves and clouds. According to Chinese mythology, which was also adopted in Korea, the first carp of the year to leap past the Dragon Gate becomes a dragon. This is used as a metaphor for a scholar passing the imperial service examinations to become an official within the imperial bureaucracy. This can also represent the ability to overcome adversity.



Mirror Decorated with a Lunar Landscape Scene

Goryeo dynasty (918–1392)
Acquired from Yamanaka, 1930
XLIX:II:A.09.

A mansion enveloped by clouds is depicted in the background of this mirror decoration. The fact that it is surrounded by clouds implies that the mansion is in an otherworldly context. In the middle ground, a group of three people are on the left, also on clouds. The person in the middle is Chang E, the goddess of the moon, flanked by two attendants. In the center, a rabbit pounds medicine that will grant immortality with a mortar and pestle. A toad, which has been associated with the moon since at least the Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE), is to the right of the rabbit. An attendant is crossing a bridge, near the rabbit and toad, followed by his master. On the right of the mirror is a large tree. This is the cinnamon tree that grows on the moon, according to mythology. A dragon leaps through waves in the foreground. Dragons are associated with rain and the emperor.

The scene on this mirror probably depicts a tale about the Tang dynasty (618–907) Emperor Xuanzong (r. 712–756), represented by the figure on the far right. According to this story, the emperor had a dream in which he journeyed to the moon. During this excursion, he met the goddess Chang E.⁶



Plain Mirror

Goryeo dynasty (918–1392)
Acquired by Yamanaka, 1930
XLIX:II:A.12.

This simple mirror stands out from the other mirrors in the collection. It is relatively thin, unadorned and has a hanging loop on the side of the mirror, rather than on the centre of the backside. These are clues that the mirror was supposed to be hung, perhaps either on a person or their clothing or on a wall.

Since the earliest times, mirrors were appreciated for what was believed to be spiritual qualities in East Asia. Even today, many people associate mirrors with warding off negative influences. This mirror was most likely used as an amulet for such purposes. Within more recent ethnographic studies, mirrors used by Korean shamans were thought to represent the face of a god. They could be hung on the wall of an altar, representing the deity that is the centre of attention.⁷

Notes:

1 Horlyck 2005, p. 12.

2 See Covell 1986, p. 149. Indeed, the geometric lines of the Bronze Age mirrors could be interpreted as the rays of the sun.

3 <http://folkency.nfm.go.kr/en/topic/detail/2082> [accessed 06 November 2019].

4 Covell 1986, p. 176, p. 187.

5 One example is the collection of the National Museum of Korea, accession number: Deoksu 3407.

6 Kerr 1990, p. 94.

7 <http://folkency.nfm.go.kr/en/topic/detail/2082> [Accessed 16 August 2019].

Other Small Treasures in the Hallwyl Collection of Small Bronzes

Michel Lee

THERE WAS A proliferation of bronze objects, particularly weapons and personal adornments, during the Eastern Zhou dynasty (770–256 BCE). This was partly due to the collapse of royal authority and competition amongst the bronze objects, particularly weapons and personal adornments, during the Eastern Zhou dynasty (770–256 BCE). This was partly due to the collapse of royal authority and warfare amongst various states competing for power. Bronze became more widely accessible, and the material was also used to express one's status. Bronze luxury objects were more plentiful. The box fragment (p. 113) and animal-headed spout (p.111) do not appear to be ceremonial objects, which means they were probably prestige objects. The “taotie” mask fittings (p. 112) were used to decorate and enhance the objects they were once attached to. More significantly, bronze coinage began to be minted. The two “ant nose” coins (p. 109) in the collection of the Hallwyl Museum represents some of the earliest bronze coins that were used in China.



Two “Ant Nose” (蟻鼻 *yibi*) Coins

Eastern Zhou dynasty, Warring States period (475–221 BCE)

Reportedly discovered in Shouzhou (centered in present-day Shou County,

Anhui province)

XLIX:I:C.a.01.

These simple drop-shaped coins were minted by the state of Chu during the Warring States period. They were inspired by cowrie shells, which was an older form of currency. The term “ant nose” was due to the inscriptions on the coins looking like faces on some types of these coins (right). They are also known as “ghost face coins” (guilian qian) for the same reason. The holes in the coins allowed them to be strung together.



Small Wheel-like Object with Chevron Pattern

Dating unknown

Reportedly discovered in Shouzhou (centered in present-day
Shou County, Anhui province)

XLIX:I:C.u.03.

This small wheel-like object has repeating chevron patterns along the surface. It has a hole that goes through the object. It may have been used as a tool to stamp patterns into wet clay, either for ceramics or making moulds from which bronze objects were cast.



Spout in the Form of an Animal Head

Eastern Zhou dynasty, Warring States period (475–221 BCE)

Reportedly discovered in Shouzhou (centered in present-day

Shou County, Anhui province)

XLIX:I:C.s.01.

This object is a spout in the form of a scaly animal head. It has spiral horns, and the mouth serves as the opening of the spout. There are still remnants of brown lacquer on the surface, reminding us that some of these objects would have originally had a different surface appearance than today.



Pair of “Taotie 饕餮” Monster Masks

Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE)
Reportedly discovered in Sianfu, Shaanxi province.
XLIX:C.f.01.

This type of “taotie” monster mask appears frequently in Chinese Bronze Age objects and probably have origins in the Neolithic period. A more realistic style of these horned masks, such as this pair, start to appear during the Han dynasty. There is a loop in the mouth of each mask, which would have been originally held a ring handle. Such objects would have decorated objects, such as lacquered boxes.



Fragment of a Box

Eastern Zhou dynasty, Warring States period (475–221 BCE)

Reportedly discovered in Shouzhou (centered in present-day

Shou County, Anhui province)

XLIX:I:C.b.f.01.

The decoration on this object is filled with abstract coiled dragons. The dragons' claws can be seen in various places. A pin inserts into a hole in the fragment that secures a ring handle to the box. This piece is one of three fragments belonging to the same box that Karlbeck had purchased. Besides the fragment in the collection of the Hallwyl Museum, the other two fragments are in the collections of the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities in Stockholm and the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston.



Fitting with Decoration of a Feline Head

Western Han dynasty, 1st century BCE

XLIX:C.c.01.

Of spade-like shape with a small tab at the back, this small bronze piece is decorated with the head of a feline. The function of this object is unknown. Felines have traditionally played a protective role within East Asia. Their images were often used to keep negative forces away. They start to appear more frequently during the Han dynasty, and it is possible that the representation of the cat was thought to keep its owner safe.



Acupuncture needle (?)

Eastern Zhou dynasty, Warring States period (475–221 BCE) or later
Reportedly discovered in Shouzhou (centered in present-day Shou County,
Anhui province)
XLIX:I:C.x.01.

The head of this needle is rounded with a small protrusion on the top. The head is waisted and has triangular depressions, which would have been inlaid, probably with turquoise. The needle itself is angled and comes to a point at the end.

This object has traditionally been catalogued as a hairpin. However, there are several similar objects in the collection of the Hallwyl Museum that are much shorter and would not have been practical to use as hairpins. This study would like to explore the possibility that these objects may be acupuncture needles. Gold and silver acupuncture needles have been discovered in the Han Dynasty tomb of Liu Sheng 劉勝 (died 113 BCE). These needles measure 6-7 centimeters long and are also angular, similar to the object in question. The *Lingshu Jing* (靈樞經) is an ancient Chinese medical text that was probably compiled in the 1st century BCE, based on earlier texts. Acupuncture is already discussed on this early work.

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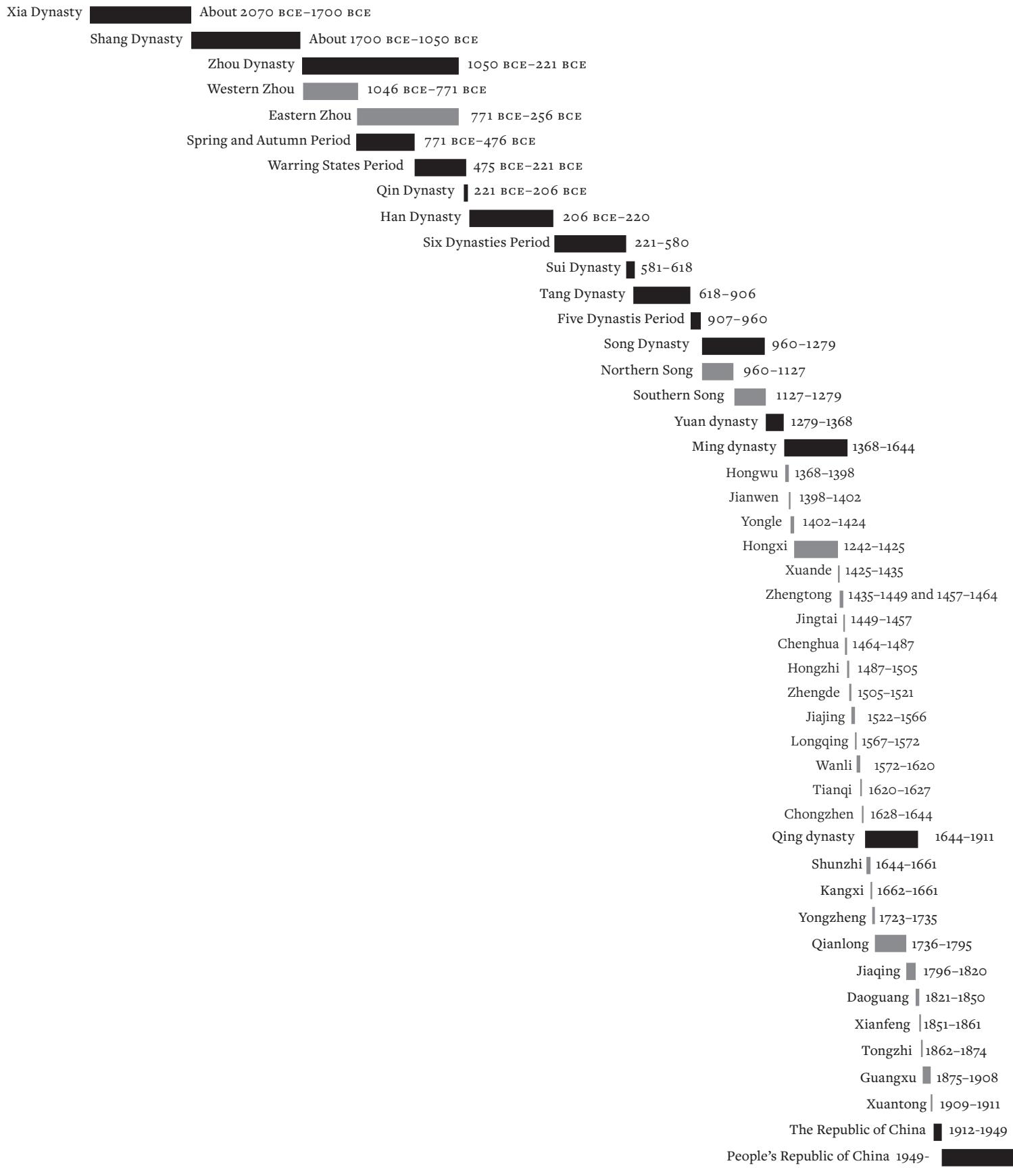


Tuning Peg for a Stringed Instrument (瑟 se)

Western Han dynasty (206 BCE–9 CE)
XLIX:I:C.m.02

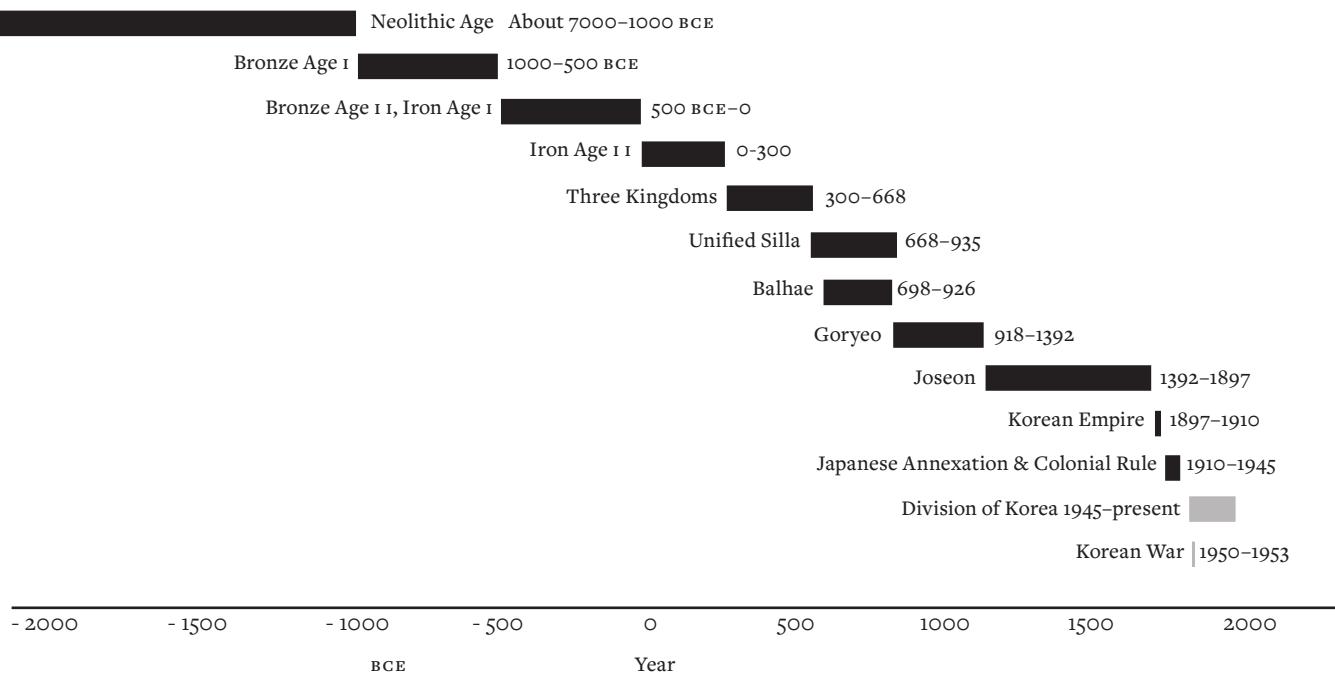
Reportedly discovered in the Huai River Valley

The Dynasties of China



- 2000 - 1500 - 1000 - 500 0 500 1000 1500 2000

Timeline Korea



Project manager & editor Online exhibition & Pdf publication	<i>Annika Williams, Curator the Hallwyl Collection, Department of Collections and research, The Unit of historical collections, The National historical museums</i>
Curator online exhibition & main author of essays	<i>Michel Lee, Curator China and Korea, Department of Collections, The National Museums of World Culture</i>
Orvar Karlbeck essay	<i>Eva Aggeklint, Antiquarian, Department of Collections and research, The National historical museums</i>
Graphic Design	<i>Josefin Janson, Graphic designer</i>
Producer of the online exhibition	<i>Sara Dixon, curator, The Department of Digitization and Communication</i>
Photo	<i>Ola Myrin, Photographer, Department of Communication and Digitization, The National historical museums</i>
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Conservator	<i>Ulrik Skans, Metallic conservator, Department of Collections and research, Unit of Archeology, The National historical museums</i>